ST RONAN'S WELL

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY,

QUENTIN DURWARD," &c.

A merry place, 'tis said, in days of yore;
But something ails it now—the place is cursed.
WORDSWORTH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER I.

AN OLD-WORLD LANDLADY.

> But to make up my tale,
> She breweth good ale,
> And thereof maketh sale.
>
> SKELTON.

ALTHOUGH few, if any, of the countries of Europe, have increased so rapidly in wealth and cultivation as Scotland during the last half century, Sultan Mahmoud's owls might nevertheless have found in Caledonia, at any term within that flourishing period, their dowry of ruined villages. Accident or local advantages have, in many instances, transferred the inhabitants of ancient hamlets, from the situations which their predecessors chose, with more respect to security than

convenience, to those in which their increasing industry and commerce could more easily expand itself; and hence places which stand distinguished in Scottish history, and which figure in David Macpherson's excellent historical map, can now only be discerned from the wild moor by the verdure which clothes their site, or, at best, by a few scattered ruins, resembling pinfolds, which mark the spot of their former existence.

The little village of St Ronan's, though it had not yet fallen into the state of entire oblivion we have described, was, about twenty years since, fast verging towards it. The situation had something in it so romantic, that it provoked the pencil of every passing tourist; and we will endeavour, therefore, to describe it in language which can scarce be less intelligible than some of their sketches, avoiding, however, for reasons which seem to us of weight, to give any more exact indication of the site, than that it is on the southern side of the Forth, and not above thirty miles distant from the English frontier.

A river of considerable magnitude pours its streams through a narrow vale, varying in breadth

from two miles to a fourth of that distance, and which, being composed of rich alluvial soil, is, and has long been, enclosed, tolerably well inhabited, and cultivated with all the skill of Scottish agriculture. Either side of this valley is bounded by a chain of hills, which, on the right in particular, may be almost termed mountains. Little brooks arising in these ridges, and finding their way to the river, offer each its own little vale to the industry of the cultivator. Some of them bear fine large trees, which have as yet escaped the axe, and upon the banks of most there are scattered, from space to space, patches and fringes of natural copsewood, above and around which the bare banks of the stream arise, somewhat desolate in the colder months, but in summer glowing with dark purple heath, or with the golden lustre of the broom and gorse. This is a sort of scenery peculiar to those countries, which abound, like Scotland, in hills and in streams, and where the traveller is ever and anon discovering in some intricate and unexpected recess, a simple and sylvan beauty, which pleases him the more, that it seems to be peculiarly his own property as the first discoverer.

In one of these recesses, and so near its opening as to command the prospect of the river, the broader valley, and the opposite chain of hills, stood, and, unless neglect and desertion have completed their work, still stands, the ancient and decayed village of St Ronan's. The site was singularly picturesque, as the straggling street of the village ran up a very steep hill, on the side of which were clustered, as it were, upon little terraces, the cottages which composed the place, seeming, as in the Swiss towns on the Alps, to rise above each other towards the ruins of an old castle, which continued to occupy the crest of the eminence, and the strength of which had doubtless led the neighbourhood to assemble under its walls for protection. It must, indeed, have been a place of formidable defence, for, on the side opposite to the town, its walls rose straight up from the verge of a tremendous precipice, whose base was washed by St Ronan's burn, as the brook was entitled. On the southern side, where the declivity was less precipitous, the ground had been carefully levelled into successive terraces, which ascended to the summit of

the hill, and were, or rather had been, connected by stair-cases of stone, rudely ornamented. In peaceful periods these terraces had been occupied by the gardens of the Castle, and in times of siege, they added to its security; for each commanded the other, so that they could be separately and successively defended, and all were exposed to the fire from the place itself—a massive square tower of the largest size, surrounded, as usual, by lower buildings, and a high embattled wall. On the northern side, a considerable mountain, of which the descent that lay between the eminence on which the Castle was situated seemed a detached portion, had been improved and deepened by three successive huge trenches. Another very deep trench was drawn in front of the main entrance from the east, where the principal gateway formed the termination of the street, which, as we have noticed, ascended from the village, and this last defence completed the fortifications of the tower.

In the ancient gardens of the Castle, and upon all sides of it excepting the western, which was precipitous, large old trees had found root,

mantling the rock and the ancient and ruinous walls with their dusky verdure, and increasing the effect of the shattered pile which towered up from the centre.

Seated on the threshold of this ancient pile, where the "proud porter" had in former days "rear'd himself,"* a stranger had a complete and commanding view of the decayed village, the houses of which, to a fanciful imagination, might seem as if they had been suddenly arrested in hurrying down the precipitous hill, and fixed as if by magic in the whimsical arrangement which they now presented. It was like a sudden pause in one of Amphion's country-dances, when the huts which were to form the future Thebes were jigging it to his lute. But, with such an observer, the melancholy excited by the desolate appearance of the village soon overcame all more light frolics of the imagination. Originally constructed on the humble plan used in the building of Scotch cottages about a cen-

* See the old Ballad of King Estmere, in PERCY'S *Reliques*.

tury ago, the greater part of them had been long deserted, and their fallen roofs, blackened gables, and ruinous walls, shewed Desolation's triumph over Poverty. On some huts the rafters, varnished with soot, were still standing, in whole or in part, like skeletons, and a few, wholly or partially covered with thatch, seemed still inhabited, though scarce habitable; for the smoke of the peat-fires, which prepared the humble meal of the indwellers, stole upwards, not only from the chimneys, its regular vent, but from various other crevices in the roofs. Nature, in the meanwhile, always changing, but renewing as she changes, was supplying, by the power of vegetation, the fallen and decaying marks of human labour. Small pollards, which had been formerly planted around the little gardens, had now waxed into huge and high forest trees; the fruit trees had extended their branches over the verges of the little yards, and the hedges had shot up into huge and irregular bushes; while quantities of dock, and nettles, and hemlock, hiding the ruined walls, were busily converting the whole scene of desolation into a picturesque forest-bank.

Two houses in St Ronan's were still in something like decent repair; places essential—the one to the spiritual weal of the inhabitants, the other to the accommodation of travellers. These were the clergyman's manse and the village inn. Of the former we need only say, that it formed no exception to the general rule by which the landed proprietors of Scotland seem to proceed in lodging their clergy, not only in the cheapest, but in the ugliest and most inconvenient house which the wit of masonry can contrive. It had the usual number of chimneys—two, namely—rising like asses ears at either end, which answered the purpose for which they were designed as ill as usual. It had all the ordinary leaks and inlets to the fury of the elements, which usually form the subject of the complaints of a Scottish incumbent to his brethren of the presbytery; and, to complete the picture, the clergyman being a bachelor, the pigs had unmolested admission to the garden and court-yard, broken windows were repaired with brown paper, and the disordered and squalid appearance of a low farm-house, occupied by

bankrupt tenant, dishonoured the dwelling of one, who, besides his clerical character, was a scholar and a gentleman, though a little of a humourist.

Beside the manse stood the kirk of St Ronan's, a little old mansion with a clay floor, and an assembly of wretched pews, originally of carved oak, but heedfully clouted with white fir-deal. But the outside form of the church was elegant in the outline, having been built in Catholic times, when we cannot deny to the forms of ecclesiastical architecture that grace, which, as good Protestants, we refuse to their doctrine. The fabric hardly raised its grey and vaulted roof among the crumbling hills of mortality by which it was surrounded, and was indeed so small in size, and so much lowered in height by the graves on the outside, which ascended half way up the little Saxon windows, that it might itself have appeared only a funeral vault, or mausoleum of larger size. Its little square tower, with the ancient belfrey, alone distinguished it from such a monument. But when the grey-headed beadle turned the keys with his shaking hand, the antiquary

was admitted into an ancient building, which from the style of its architecture, and some monuments of the Mowbrays of St Ronan's, which the old man was accustomed to point out, was generally conjectured to be as early as the thirteenth century.

These Mowbrays of St Ronan's seem to have been at one time a very powerful family. They were allied to, and friends of the house of Douglas, at the time when the overgrown power of that heroic race made the Stuarts tremble on the Scottish throne. It followed that, when, as our old *naïf* historian expresses it, "no one dared to strive with a Douglas, nor yet with a Douglas's man; for if he did, he was sure to come by the waur,' the family of St Ronan's shared their prosperity, and became lords of almost the whole of the rich valley of which their mansion commanded the prospect. But upon the turning of the tide, in the reign of James II., they became despoiled of the greater part of those fair acquisitions, and succeeding events reduced their importance still farther. Nevertheless, they were, in the middle of the seventeenth century, still a

family of considerable note; and Sir Reginald Mowbray, after the unhappy battle of Dunbar, distinguished himself by the obstinate defence of the Castle against the arms of Cromwell, who, incensed at the opposition which he had unexpectedly encountered in an obscure corner, caused the fortress to be dismantled and blown up with gunpowder.

After this catastrophe the old Castle was abandoned to ruin; but Sir Reginald, when, like Allan Ramsay's Sir William Worthy, he returned after the Revolution, built himself a house in the fashion of that later age, which he prudently suited in size to the diminished fortunes of his family. It was situated about the middle of the village, whose vicinity was not in those days judged any inconvenience, upon a spot of ground more level than was presented by the rest of the acclivity, where, as we said before, the houses were notched as it were into the side of the steep bank, with little more level ground about them than the spot occupied by their site. But the Laird's house had a court in front and a small garden behind, which again was connected with

another garden, which, occupying three terraces, descended, in emulation of the orchards of the old Castle, almost to the banks of the stream.

The family continued to inhabit this new messuage until about fifty years before the commencement of our history, when it was much damaged by a casual fire; and the laird of the day, having just succeeded to a more pleasant and commodious dwelling at the distance of about three miles from the village, determined to abandon the habitation of his ancestors. As he cut down at the same time an ancient rookery, (perhaps to defray the expenses of the migration,) it became a common remark among the country folks, that the decay of St Ronan's began when Laird Lawrence and the crows flew off.

The deserted mansion, however, was not consigned to owls and birds of the desart; on the contrary, for many years it witnessed more fun and festivity than when it had been the sombre abode of a grave Scottish Baron of "auld lang syne." In short, it was converted into an inn, and marked by a huge sign, representing on the one side St Ronan catching hold of the devil's game-

leg with his Episcopal crook, as the story may be read in his veracious legend, and on the other the Mowbray arms. It was by far the best frequented public-house in that vicinity; and a thousand stories were told of the revels which had been held within its walls, and the gambols which had been achieved under the influence of its liquors. All this, however, had been long over.

> A merry spot, 'twas said, in days of yore;
> But something ail'd it now,—the place was cursed.

The worthy couple (servants and favourites of the Mowbray family) who first kept the inn, had died reasonably wealthy, after long carrying on a flourishing trade, leaving behind them an only daughter. They had acquired by degrees not only the property of the inn itself, of which they were originally tenants, but of some remarkably good meadow-land by the side of the brook, which, when touched by a little pecuniary necessity, the Lairds of St Ronan's had disposed of piece-meal, as the readiest way to portion off a daughter, procure a commission for the younger son, and the like emergencies. So that Meg Dods, when she succeeded to her parents, was a considerable heiress, and, as such, had the ho-

nour of refusing three topping farmers, two bonnet-lairds, and a horse-couper, who successively made proposals to her.

Many bets were laid on the horse-couper's success, but the knowing ones were taken in. Determined to ride the fore-horse herself, Meg would admit no helpmate who might soon assert the rights of a master; and so, in single blessedness, and with all the despotism of Queen Bess herself, she ruled all matters with a high hand, not only over her men servants and maid servants, but over the stranger within her gates, who, if he ventured to oppose Meg's sovereign will and pleasure, or desire to have either fare or accommodation different from that which she chose to provide him, was instantly ejected with that answer which Erasmus tells us silenced all complaints in the German inns of his time, *Quære aliud hospitium*; or, as Meg expressed it, "Troop aff wi' ye to another public." As this amounted to a banishment equal to sixteen miles from Meg's residence, the unhappy party on whom it was passed had no other refuge save deprecating the wrath of his landlady, and implicit resignation to her will, and his own fate. It is but justice to

Meg Dods to state, that though hers was a severe and almost despotic government, it could not be termed a tyranny, since it was exercised upon the whole for the good of the subject.

The vaults of the old Laird's cellar had not, even in his own day, been replenished with more excellent wines; the only difficulty was to prevail on Meg to look for the precise liquor you chose;—to which it may be added, that she often became restive when she thought a company had had "as much as did them good," and refused to furnish any more supplies. Then her kitchen was her pride and glory; she looked to the dressing of every dish herself, and there were some with which she suffered no one to interfere. Such were the cock-a-leeky, and the savoury minced collops, which rivalled in their way even the veal cutlets of our old friend Mrs Hall, at Ferrybridge. Meg's table-linen, bed-linen, and so forth, were always home-made, of the best quality, and in the best order; and a weary day was that to the chambermaid in which her lynx-eye discovered any neglect of the strict cleanliness which she constantly enforced. Indeed, considering Meg's country

and calling, we were never able to account for her extreme and scrupulous nicety, unless by supposing that it afforded her the most apt and frequent pretext for scolding her maids; an exercise in which she displayed so much eloquence and energy, that we must needs suppose it to have been a favourite one.

We have only further to commemorate the moderation of Meg's reckonings, which, when they closed the banquet, often relieved the apprehensions, instead of saddening the heart, of the rising guest. A shilling for breakfast, three shillings for dinner, including a pint of old port, eighteenpence for a snug supper—such were the charges of the inn of Saint Ronan's, under this landlady of the olden world, even after the nineteenth century had commenced; and they were ever tendered with the pious recollection, that her good father never charged half so much, but these weary times rendered it impossible for her to make the lawing less.

Notwithstanding all these excellent and rare properties, the inn at Saint Ronan's shared the decay of the village to which it belonged. This

was owing to various circumstances. The high-road had been turned aside from the place, the steepness of the street being murder, (so the postillions declared,) to their post-horses. It was thought that Meg's stern refusal to treat them with liquor, or to connive at their exchanging for porter and whisky the corn which should feed their cattle, had no small influence on the opinion of these respectable gentlemen, and that a little cutting and levelling would have made the ascent easy enough; but let that pass. It was an injury which Meg did not easily forgive to the country gentlemen, most of whom she had recollected when children. "Their fathers," she said, "wad not have done the like of it to a lone woman." Then the decay of the village itself, which had formerly contained a set of feuars and bonnet-lairds, who, under the name of the Chirupping Club, contrived to drink two-penny, qualified with brandy or whisky, at least twice or thrice a-week, was some small loss.

The temper and manners of the landlady scared away all customers of that numerous class, who will not allow originality to be an ex-

cuse for the breach of decorum, and who, accustomed perhaps to little attendance at home, love to play the great man at an inn, and to have a certain number of bows, deferential speeches, and apologies, in answer to the G— d—n ye's which they bestow on the house, attendance, and entertainment. Those who commenced this sort of barter in the Clachan of Saint Ronans, well could Meg Dods pay back, but it was in their own coin; and glad they were to escape from the house with eyes not quite scratched out, and ears not more deafened than if they had been within hearing of a pitched battle.

Nature had formed honest Meg for such encounters; and as her noble soul delighted in them, so her outward properties were in what Tony Lumpkin calls a concatenation accordingly. She had hair of a brindled colour, betwixt black and grey, which was apt to escape in elf-locks from under her mutch when she was thrown into violent agitation—long skinny hands, terminated by stout talons—grey eyes, thin lips, a robust person, a broad, though flat chest, capital wind, and a voice that could match a choir of

fish-women. She was accustomed to say of herself in her more gentle moods, that her bark was worse than her bite ; but what teeth could have matched a tongue, which, when in full career, is vouched to have been heard from the Kirk to the Castle of Saint Ronan's?

These notable gifts, however, had no charms for the travellers of these light and giddy-paced times, and Meg's inn became less and less frequented. What carried the evil to the uttermost was, that a fanciful lady of rank in the neighbourhood chanced to recover of some imaginary complaint by the use of a mineral well about a mile and a half from the village; a fashionable doctor was found to write an analysis of the healing stream, with a list of sundry cures; a speculative builder took land in feu, and erected lodging-houses, shops, and even streets. At length a tontine subscription was obtained to erect an inn, which, for the more grace, was called a hotel; and so the desertion of Meg Dods became general.

She had still, however, her friends and well-wishers, many of whom thought, that as she was

a lone woman, and known to be well to pass in the world, she would act wisely to retire from public life, and take down a sign which had no longer fascination for guests. But Meg's spirit scorned submission, direct or implied. "Her father's door," she said, "should be open to the road, till her father's bairn should be streekit and carried out at it with her feet foremost. It was not for the profit—there was little profit at it;—profit?—there was a dead loss;—but she wad not be dung by any of them. They maun hae a hottle, maun they?—and an honest public canna serve them! They may hottle on that likes; but they shall see that Luckie Dods can hottle on as lang as the best of them—ay, though they had made a Tamteen of it, and linkit aw their breaths of lives, whilk are in their nostrils, on end of ilk other like a string of wild geese, and the langest liver bruick a', whilk was sinful presumption, she would match ilk ane of them as lang as her ain wind held out." Fortunate it was for Meg, since she had formed this doughty resolution, that although her inn had decayed in custom, her land had risen in value in a degree

which more than compensated the balance on the wrong side of her books, and, joined to her usual providence and economy, enabled her to act up to her lofty purpose.

She prosecuted her trade too with every attention to its diminished income; shut up the windows of one half of her house, to baffle the tax-gatherer; retrenched her furniture; discharged her pair of post-horses, and pensioned off the old hump-backed postillion who drove them, retaining his services, however, as an assistant to a still more aged hostler. To console herself for restrictions by which her pride was secretly wounded, she agreed with the celebrated Dick Tinto to re-paint her father's sign, which had become rather indecypherable; and Dick accordingly gilded the Bishop's crook, and augmented the horrors of the Devil's aspect, until it became a terror to all the younger fry of the school-house, and a sort of visible illustration of the terrors of the arch-enemy, with which the minister endeavoured to impress their infant minds.

Under this renewed symbol of her profession, Meg Dods, or Meg Dorts, as she was popularly

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Under this renewed symbol of her profession, Meg Dods, or Meg Dorts, as she was popularly

termed, on account of her refractory humours, was still patronized by some steady customers. Such were the members of the Killnakelty Hunt, once famous on the turf and in the field, but now a set of venerable grey-headed sportsmen, who had sunk from fox-hounds to basket-beagles and coursing, and who made an easy canter on their quiet nags a gentle induction to a dinner at Meg's. "A set of honest decent men they were," Meg said; "had their sang and their joke—and what for no? Their bind was just a Scots pint over-head, and a tappit-hen to the bill, and no man ever saw them the waur o't. It was thae cockle-brained callants of the present day that would be mair owerta'en with a puir quart than douce folks were with a magnum."

Then there were a set of ancient brethren of the angle from Edinburgh who visited Saint Ronan's frequently in the spring and summer, a class of guests peculiarly acceptable to Meg, who permitted them more latitude in her premises than she was known to allow to any other body. "They were," she said, "pawky auld carles, that kenn'd whilk side their bread was buttered upon.

Ye never kenn'd of ony o' them ganging to the spring, as they behoved to ca' the stinking auld well yonder. Na, na—they were up in the morning—had their parritch, wi' maybe a thimblefull of brandy, and then awa up into the hills, eat their bit cauld meat on the heather, and came hame at e'en wi' the creel full of caller trouts, and had them to their dinner, and their quiet cogue of ale, and their drap punch, and were set singing their catches and glees, as they ca'd them, till ten o'clock, and then to bed, wi' God bless ye—and what for no?"

Thirdly, we may commemorate some ranting blades, who also came from the metropolis to visit Saint Ronan's, attracted by the humours of Meg, and still more by the excellence of her liquor, and the cheapness of her reckonings.—These were members of the Helter Skelter Club, of the Wildfire Club, and other associations formed for the express purpose of getting rid of care and sobriety. Such dashers occasioned many a racket in Meg's house, and many a *bourasque* in Meg's temper. Various were the arts of flattery and violence by which they endeavoured to get

supplies of liquor, when Meg's conscience told her they had had too much already. Sometimes they failed, as when the croupier of the Helter Skelter got himself scalded with the mulled wine, in an unsuccessful attempt to coax this formidable virago by a salute; and the excellent president of the Wildfire received a broken head from the keys of the cellar, as he endeavoured to possess himself of these emblems of authority. But little did these dauntless officials care for the exuberant frolics of Meg's temper, which were to them only "pretty Fanny's way"—the *dulces Amaryllidis iræ*. And Meg, on her part, though she often called them "drunken ne'er-do-weels, and thorough-bred High Street blackguards," allowed no other person to speak ill of them in her hearing. "They were daft callants," she said, "and that was all—when the drink was in, the wit was out—ye could not put an auld head upon young shouthers—a young cowt will canter, be it up-hill or down—and what for no?" was her uniform conclusion.

Nor must we omit, among Meg's steady customers, "faithful amongst the unfaithful found,"

the copper-nosed sheriff-clerk of the county, who, when summoned by official duty to that district of the shire, warmed by recollections of her double-brewed ale, and her generous Antigua, always advertised that his "Prieves," or "Comptis," or whatever other business was in hand, were to proceed on such a day and hour, "within the house of Margaret Dods, vintner in Saint Ronan's."

We have only farther to notice Meg's mode of conducting herself towards chance travellers, who, knowing nothing of nearer or more fashionable accommodations, or perhaps consulting rather the state of their purse than of their taste, stumbled upon her house of entertainment. Her reception of these was as precarious as the hospitality of a savage nation to sailors shipwrecked on their coast. If the guests seemed to have made her mansion their free choice—or if she liked their appearance (and her taste was very capricious)—above all, if they seemed pleased with what they got, and little disposed to criticize or give trouble, it was all very well. But if they had come to Saint Ronan's because the house at

the Well was full—or if she disliked what the sailor calls the cut of their jibb—or if, above all, they were critical about their accommodations, none so likely as Meg to give them what in her country is called a *sloan*. In fact, she reckoned such persons a part of that ungenerous and ungrateful public, for whose sake she was keeping her house open at a dead loss, and who had left her, as it were, a victim to her public zeal.

Hence arose the different reports concerning the little inn of Saint Ronan's, which some favoured travellers praised as the neatest and most comfortable old-fashioned house in Scotland, where you had good attendance, and good cheer, at moderate rates; while others, less fortunate, could only talk of the darkness of the rooms, the homeliness of the old furniture, and the detestable bad humour of Meg Dods, the landlady.

Reader, if you come from the more sunny side of the Tweed—or even if, being a Scot, you have had the advantage to be born within the last twenty-five years, you may be induced to think this portrait of Queen Elizabeth, in Dame Quickly's piqued hat and green apron, somewhat

overcharged in the features. But I appeal to my own contemporaries, who have known wheel-road, bridle-way, and foot-path, for thirty years, whether they do not, every one of them, remember Meg Dods—or somebody very like her. Indeed, so much is this the case, that about the period I mention, I should have been afraid to have rambled from the Scottish metropolis, in almost any direction, lest I had lighted upon some one of the sisterhood of Dame Quickly, who might suspect me of having showed her up to the public in the character of Meg Dods. At present, though it is possible that some one or two of this peculiar class of wild-cats may still exist, their talons must be much impaired by age; and I think they can do little more than sit, like the Giant Pope in the Pilgrim's Progress, at the door of their unfrequented caverns, and grin at the pilgrims over whom they used formerly to execute their despotism.

CHAPTER II.

THE GUEST.

Quis novus hic hospes?
Dido apud Virgilium.

Cha'am-maid! The Gemman in the front parlour!
BOOTS's *free Translation of the Eneid.*

IT was on a fine summer's day that a solitary traveller rode under the old-fashioned archway, and alighted in the court-yard of Meg Dods's inn, and delivered the bridle of his horse to the hump-backed postillion. "Bring my saddle-bags," he said, "into the house—or stay—I am abler, I think, to carry them than you." He then assisted the poor meagre groom to unbuckle the straps which secured the humble and now despised convenience, and meantime gave strict charges that his horse should be unbridled, and

put into a clean and comfortable stall, the girths slacked, and a cloth cast over his loins; but that the saddle should not be removed until he himself came to see him dressed.

The companion of his travels seemed in the hostler's eye deserving of this care, being a strong active horse, fit either for the road or field, but rather high in bone from a long journey, though from the state of his skin it appeared the utmost care had been bestowed to keep him in condition. While the groom obeyed the stranger's directions, the latter, with his saddle-bags laid over his arm, entered the kitchen of the inn.

Here he found the landlady herself in none of her most blessed humours. The cook-maid was abroad on some errand, and Meg, in a close review of the kitchen apparatus, was making the unpleasing discovery, that trenchers had been broken or cracked, pots and sauce-pans not so accurately scoured as her precise notions of cleanliness required, which, joined to other detections of a more petty description, stirred her bile in no small degree; so that while she disarranged and arranged the *bink*, she maundered in an under-

tone, complaints and menaces against the absent delinquent.

The entrance of a guest did not induce her to suspend this agreeable amusement—she just glanced at him as he entered, then turned her back short on him, and continued her labour and her soliloquy of lamentation. Truth is, she thought she recognized in the person of the stranger, one of those useful envoys of the commercial community, called, by themselves and the waiters, *Travellers* par excellence—by others, Riders and Bagmen. Now against this class of customers Meg had peculiar prejudices; because, there being no shops in the old village of Saint Ronan's, the said commercial emissaries, for the convenience of their traffic, always took up their abode at the New Inn, or Hotel, in the rising and rival village called Saint Ronan's Well, unless when some straggler, by chance or dire necessity, was compelled to lodge himself at the Auld Town, as the place of Meg's residence began to be generally termed. She had, therefore, no sooner formed the hasty conclusion, that the individual in question belonged to this obnoxious class, than

she resumed her former occupation, and continued to soliloquize and apostrophize her absent hand-maidens, without even appearing sensible of his presence.

"The hussy Beenie—the jaud Eppie—the deil's buckie of a callant!—Another plate gaen—they'll break me out of house and ha'!"

The traveller, who, with his saddle-bags rested on the back of a chair, had waited in silence for some note of welcome, now saw that ghost or no-ghost he must speak first, if he intended to have an answer.

"You are my old acquaintance, Mrs Margaret Dods?" said the stranger.

"What for no—and wha are ye that speers?" said Meg, in the same breath, and began to rub a brass candlestick with more vehemence than before—the dry tone in which she spoke indicating plainly, how little concern she took in the conversation.

"A traveller, good Mistress Dods, who comes to take up his lodging here for a day or two."

"I am thinking ye will be mista'en," said Meg; "there's nae room for bags or jaugs here

—ye've mista'en your road, neighbour—ye maun e'en bundle yoursell a bit farther down hill."

"I see you have not got the letter I sent you, Mistress Dods?" said the guest.

"How should I, man?" answered the hostess; "they have ta'en awa' the post-office from us—moved it down till the Spaw-well yonder, as they ca'd."

"Why, that is but a step off," observed the guest.

"Ye will get there the sooner," answered the hostess.

"Nay, but," said the guest, "if you had sent there for my letter, you would have learned——"

"I'm no wanting to learn ony thing at my years," said Meg. "If folk have ony thing to write to me about, they may gie the letter to John Hislop, the carrier, that has used the road these forty years. As for the letters at the post-mistress's, as they ca' her, down by yonder, they may bide in her shop-window, wi' the snaps and bawbee rows, till Beltane, or I loose them. I'll never file my fingers with them. Post-mistress, indeed!—Upsetting cutty! I mind her fou weel when she dreed penance for ante-nup——"

Laughing, but interrupting Meg in good time for the character of the post-mistress, the stranger assured her he had sent his fishing-rod and trunk to her confidential friend the carrier, and that he sincerely hoped she would not turn an old acquaintance out of her premises, especially as he believed he could not sleep in a bed within five miles of Saint Ronan's, if he knew that her Blue room was unengaged.

"Fishing-rod!—Auld acquaintance!—Blue room!" echoed Meg, in some surprise; and, facing round upon the stranger, and examining him with some interest and curiosity,—"Ye'll be nae bag-man, then, after a'?"

"No," said the traveller; "not since I have laid the saddle-bags out of my hand."

"Weel, I canna say but I am glad of that—I canna bide their yanking way of knapping English at every word.—I have kent decent lads amang them too—What for no?—But that was when they stopped up here whiles, like other douce folk; but since they gaed down, the hail flight of them, like a string of wild-geese, to the new-fashioned hottle yonder, I am tauld there are as

mony hellicate tricks played in the travellers' room, as they behove to call it, as if it were fou of drunken young lairds."

"That is because they want you to keep good order among them, Mistress Margaret."

"Ay, lad?" replied Meg, "ye are a fine blaw-in-my-lug, to think to cuitle me off sae cleverly!" And, facing about upon her guest, she honoured him with a more close and curious investigation than she had at first deigned to bestow upon him.

All that she remarked was in her opinion rather favourable to the stranger. He was a well-made man, rather above than under the middle size, and apparently betwixt five-and-twenty and thirty years of age—for, although he might, at first glance, have passed for one who had attained the latter period, yet, on a nearer examination, it seemed as if the burning sun of a warmer climate than Scotland, and perhaps some fatigue, both of body and mind, had imprinted the marks of care and of manhood upon his countenance, without abiding the course of years. His eyes and teeth were excellent, and his other fea-

tures, though they could be scarce termed handsome, expressed sense and acuteness; he bore, in his aspect, that ease and composure of manner, equally void of awkwardness and affectation, which is said emphatically to mark the gentleman; and, although neither the plainness of his dress, nor the total want of the usual attendants, allowed Meg to suppose him a wealthy man, she had little doubt that he was above the rank of her lodgers in general. Amidst these observations, and while she was in the course of making them, the good landlady was embarrassed with various obscure recollections of having seen the object of them formerly; but when, or on what occasion, she was quite unable to call to remembrance. She was particularly puzzled by the cold and sarcastic expression of a countenance, which she could not by any means reconcile with the recollections which it awakened. At length she said, with as much courtesy as she was capable of assuming,—"Either I have seen you before, sir, or some ane very like ye?—Ye ken the Blue room, too, and you a stranger in these parts?"

"Not so much a stranger as you may suppose, Meg," said the guest, assuming a more intimate tone, "when I call myself Frank Tyrrel."

"Tirl!" exclaimed Meg, with a tone of wonder—"It's impossible! You cannot be Francie Tirl, the wild callant that was fishing and bird's-nesting here seven or eight years syne—it canna be—Francie was but a callant!"

"But add seven or eight years to that boy's life, Meg," said the stranger gravely, "and you will find you have the man who is now before you."

"Even sae!" said Meg, with a glance at the reflection of her own countenance in the copper coffee-pot, which she had scoured so brightly, that it did the office of a mirror—"Just e'en sae—but folk maun grow auld or die.—But, Mr Tirl, for I maunna call you Francie now, I am thinking——"

"Call me what you please, good dame," said the stranger; "it has been so long since I heard any one call me by a name that sounded like former kindness, that such a one is more agreeable to me than a lord's title would be."

" Weel, then, Maister Francie—if it be no offence to you—I hope you are no Nabob ?"

" Not I, I can safely assure you, my old friend ;—but what an I were ?"

" Naething—only maybe I might bid ye gang farther, and be waur served.—Nabobs, indeed ! the country's plagued wi' them. They have raised the price of eggs and poutry for twenty miles round—But what is my business ?—They use almaist a' of them the Well down bye—they need it, ye ken, for the clearing of their copper complexions, that need scouring as much as my saucepans, that naebody can clean but mysell."

" Well, my good friend," said Tyrrel, " the upshot of all this is, that I am to stay and have dinner here."

" What for no ?" replied Mrs Dods.

" And that I am to have the Blue room for a night or two—perhaps longer ?"

" I dinna ken that," said the dame.—" The Blue room is the best—and they that get neist best, are no ill aff in this warld."

" Arrange it as you will," said the stranger,

"I leave the whole matter to you, mistress.—Meantime, I will go see after my horse."

"The merciful man," said Meg, when her guest had left the kitchen, "is merciful to his beast.—He had aye something about him by ordinar, that callant—But eh, sirs! there is a sair change on his cheek-haffit since I saw him last!—He sall no want a good dinner for auld lang syne, that I'se engage for."

Meg set about the necessary preparations with all the natural energy of her disposition, which was so much exerted upon her culinary cares, that her two maids, on their return to the house, escaped the bitter reprimand which she had been previously conning over, in reward of their alleged slatternly negligence. Nay, so far did she carry her complaisance, that when Tyrrel crossed the kitchen to recover his saddle-bags, she formally rebuked Eppie for an idle taupie, for not carrying the gentleman's things to his room.

"I thank you, mistress," said Tyrrel; "but I have some drawings and colours in these saddle-bags, and I always like to carry them myself."

"Ay, and are you at the painting trade yet?" said Meg; "an unco slaister ye used to make with it lang syne."

"I cannot live without it," said Tyrrel; and taking the saddle-bags, was formally inducted by the maid into a snug apartment, where he soon had the satisfaction to behold a capital dish of minced collops, with vegetables, and a jug of excellent ale, placed on the table by the careful hand of Meg herself. He could do no less, in acknowledgment of the honour, than ask Meg for a bottle of the yellow seal, "if there was any of that excellent claret still left."

"Left?—ay is there, walth of it," said Meg; "I dinna gie it to every body—Ah! Mr Tirl, ye have not got ower your auld tricks!—I am sure, if ye are painting for your leeving, as you say, a little rum and water would come cheaper, and do ye as much good. But ye maun hae your ain way the day, nae doubt, if ye should never have it again."

Away trudged Meg, her keys clattering as she went, and after much rummaging, returned with such a bottle of claret as no fashionable tavern

could have produced, were it called for by a duke, or at a duke's price; and she seemed not a little gratified when her guest assured her that he had not yet forgotten its excellent flavour. She retired after these acts of hospitality, and left the stranger to enjoy in quiet the excellent matters which she had placed before him.

But there was that on Tyrrel's spirits which defied the enlivening power of good cheer and of wine, which only maketh man's heart glad when that heart has no secret oppression to counteract its influence. Tyrrel found himself on a spot which he had loved in that delightful season, when youth and high spirits awake all those flattering promises which are so ill kept to manhood. He drew his chair into the embrasure of the old-fashioned window, and throwing up the sash to enjoy the fresh air, suffered his thoughts to return to former days, while his eyes wandered over objects which they had not looked upon for several eventful years. He could behold beneath his eye, the lower part of the decayed village, as its ruins peeped from the umbrageous shelter with which they were shrouded. Still

lower down, upon the little holm which formed its church-yard, was seen the Kirk of Saint Ronan's; and looking yet farther, towards the junction of Saint Ronan's Burn with the river which traversed the larger dale or valley, he could see whitened, by the western sun, the rising houses, which were either newly finished, or in the act of being built, about the medicinal spring.

"Time changes all around us," such was the course of natural, though trite reflections, which flowed upon Tyrrel's mind; "wherefore should loves and friendships have a longer date than our dwellings and our monuments?" As he indulged these sombre recollections, his officious landlady disturbed their tenor by her entrance.

"I was thinking to offer you a dish of tea, Maister Francie, just for the sake of auld lang syne, and I'll gar the quean Beenie bring it here, and mask it mysell.—But ye arena done with your wine yet?"

"I am, indeed, Mrs Dods," answered Tyrrel; "and I beg you will remove the bottle."

"Remove the bottle, and the wine no half

drank out !" said Meg, displeasure lowering on her brow ; "I hope there is nae fault to be found wi' the wine, Maister Tirl ?"

To this answer, which was put in a tone resembling defiance, Tyrrel submissively replied, by declaring, "the claret not only unexceptionable, but excellent."

"And what for dinna ye drink it then ?" said Meg, sharply ; "folk should never ask for mair liquor than they can mak a gude use of. Maybe ye think we have the fashion of the table-dot, as they ca' their new-fangled ordinary down by yonder, where a' the bits of vinegar cruets are put awa' into an awmry, as they tell me, and ilk ane wi' the bit dribbles of syndings in it, and a paper about the neck o't, to shew which of the customers is aught it—there they stand like docter's drogs—and no an honest Scotch mutchkin will ane o' their viols haud, granting it were at the fowest."

"Perhaps," said Tyrrel, willing to indulge the spleen and prejudice of his old acquaintance, "perhaps the wine is not so good as to make full measure desirable."

"Ye may say that, lad—and yet them that sell it might afford a gude pennyworth, for they hae it for the making—maist feck of it ne'er saw France or Portugal. But as I was saying—this is no ane of their new-fangled places, where wine is put by for them that canna drink it—when the cork's drawn the bottle maun be drank out—and what for no?—unless it be corkit."

"I agree entirely, Meg," said her guest; "but my ride to-day has somewhat heated me—and I think a dish of the tea you promise me, will do me more good than to finish my bottle."

"Na, then, the best I can do for you is to put it by, to be sauce for the wild-duck to-morrow; for I think ye said ye were to bide here for a day or twa."

"It is my very purpose, Meg, unquestionably," replied Tyrrel.

"Sae be it then," said Mrs Dods; "and then the liquor's no lost—it has been seldom sic claret as that has simmered in a sauce-pan, let me tell you that, neighbour;—and I mind the day, when head-ache or nae head-ache, ye wad

hae been at the hinder-end of that bottle, and maybe anither, if ye could have gotten it wiled out of me. But then ye had your cousin to help you—Ah! he was a blithe bairn that Valentine Bulmer!—Ye were a canty callant too, Maister Francie, and muckle ado I had to keep ye baith in order when ye were on the ramble. But ye were a thought doucer than Valentine—But O! he was a bonnie bairn!—wi' een like diamonds, cheeks like roses, a head like a heather-tap—he was the first I ever saw wear a crap, as they ca' it, but a' body cheats the barber now—and he had a laugh that wad hae raised the dead!—What wi' flyting on him, and what wi' laughing at him, there was nae minding ony other body when that Valentine was in the house.—And how is your cousin Valentine Bulmer, Maister Francie?"

Tyrrel looked down, and only answered with a sigh.

"Ay—and is it even sae?" said Meg; "and has the puir bairn been sae soon removed frae this fashious warld?—Ay—ay—we maun a' gang ae gate—crackit quart-stoups and geisen'd bar-

rels—leaky quaighs are we a', and canna keep in the liquor of life—Ohon, sirs!—Was the puir lad Bulmer frae Bu'mer bay, where they land the Hollands, think ye, Maister Francie?—They whiles rin in a pickle tea there too—I hope that is good that I have made you, Maister Francie?"

"Excellent, my good dame," said Francis Tyrrel; but it was in a tone of voice which intimated that she had pressed upon a subject which awakened some unpleasant reflections.

"And when did this puir lad die?" continued Meg, who was not without her share of Eve's qualities, and wished to know something concerning what seemed to affect her guest so particularly; but he disappointed her purpose, and at the same time awakened another train of sentiment in her mind, by turning again to the window, and looking upon the distant buildings at Saint Ronan's Well. As if he had observed for the first time these new objects, he said to Mistress Dods in an indifferent tone, "You have got some gay new neighbours yonder, mistress."

"Neighbours!" said Meg, her wrath beginning to arise, as it always did upon any allusion

to this sore subject—"Ye may ca' them neighbours, if ye like—but the deil flee awa' wi' the neighbourhood for Meg Dods!"

"I suppose," said Tyrrel, as if he did not observe her displeasure, "that yonder is the Fox Hotel they told me of."

"The Fox!" said Meg; "I am sure it is the fox that has carried off a' my geese.—I might shut up house, Maister Francie, if it was the thing I lived by—me, that has seen a' our gentle-folks bairns, and gien them snaps and sugar-biscuit maist of them wi' my ain hand. They wad hae seen my father's roof-tree fa' down and smoor me before they wad hae gien a boddle a piece to have propped it up—but they could a' link out their fifty pounds ower head to bigg a hottle at the well yonder. And muckle they hae made o't—the bankrupt body, Sandie Lawson, hasna paid them a bawbee of four terms' rent."

"Surely, mistress, I think if the well became so famous for its cures, the least the gentlemen could have done was to make you the Priestess."

"Me priestess! I am nae Quaker, I wot,

Maister Francie; and I never heard of ale-wife who turned preacher, except Luckie Buchan in the west. And if I were to preach, I think I have mair the spirit of a Scotchwoman, than to preach in the very room they hae been dancing in ilka night in the week, Saturday itsel not excepted, and that till twal o'clock at night. Na, na, Maister Francie; I leave the like o' that to Mr Simon Chatterly, as they ca' the bit prelatical sprig of divinity from the town yonder, that plays at cards, and dances six days in the week, and on the seventh reads the Common Prayer-book in the ball-room, with Tam Simson, the drunken barber, for his clerk."

"I think I have heard of Mr Chatterly," said Tyrrel.

"Ye'll be thinking o' the sermon he has printed," said the angry dame, "where he compares their nasty puddle of a well yonder to the pool of Bethesda, like a foul-mouthed, fleeching, feather-headed fule as he is! He should hae ken'd that the place got a' its fame in the times of black popery; and though they pat it in St Ronan's

name, I'll never believe for one that the honest man had ony hand in it; for I have been tell'd by ane that suld ken, that he was nae Roman, but only a Cuddie, or Culdee, or such like.—But will ye not take anither dish of tea, Maister Francie? and a wee bit of the diet-loaf, raised wi' my ain fresh butter, Maister Francie? and no wi' greasy kitchen-fee, like the seed-cake down at the confectioner's yonder, that has as mony dead flees as carvey in it. Set him up for confectioner!—Wi' a penny-worth of rye-meal, and anither of tryacle, and twa or three carvy-seeds, I will make better confections than ever cam out of his o'on."

"I have no doubt of that, Mrs Dods," said the guest; "and I only wish to know how these new comers were able to establish themselves against a house of such good reputation and old standing as yours?—It was the virtues of the mineral, I dare say; but how came the waters to recover a character all at once, mistress?"

"I dinna ken, sir—they used to be thought good for naething, but here and there a puir body's bairn, that had gotten the cruells, and

could not afford a pennyworth of salts. But my Lady Penelope Penfeather had fa'an ill, it's like, as nae other body ever fell ill, and sae she was to be cured some gate naebody was ever cured, which was naething mair than was reasonable—and my lady, ye ken, has wit at wull, and has a' the wise folk out from Edinburgh at her house at Windywa's yonder, which it is her leddyship's will and pleasure to call Air-castle—and they have a' their different turns, and some can clink verses, wi' their tale, as weel as Rob Burns or Allan Ramsay—and some rin up hill and down dale, knapping the chucky stanes to pieces wi' hammers, like sae mony road-makers run daft—they say it is to see how the warld was made!—and some that play on all manner of ten-stringed instruments—and a wheen sketching souls, that ye may see perched like craws on every craig in the country, e'en working at your ain trade, Maister Francie; forbye men that had been in foreign parts, or said they had been there, whilk was a' ane, ye ken; and maybe twa or three draggle-tailed misses, that wear her follies when she has dune wi' them, as her queans of maids

wear her second-hand claithes. So, after her leddyship's happy recovery, as they ca'd it, down came the hail tribe of wild geese, and settled by the Well, to dine thereout on the bare grund, like a wheen tinklers; and they had sangs, and tunes, and healths, nae doubt, in praise of the fountain, as they ca'd the well, and of Lady Penelope Penfeather; and, lastly, they behoved a' to take a solemn bumper of the spring, which, as I'm tauld, made unco havoc amang them or they wan hame; and this they called Picknick, and a plague to them! And sae the jig was begun after her leddyship's pipe, and mony a mad measure has been danced sin' syne; for down came masons and murgeon-makers, and preachers and player-folk, and episcopalians and methodists, and fools and fiddlers, and papists and pye-bakers, and doctors and drugsters; bye the shop-folk, that sell trash and trumpery at three prices—and so up got the bonnie new Well, and down fell the honest auld town of St Ronan's, where blithe decent folk had been heartsome eneugh for mony a day before ony o' them were born, or ony sic vapouring fancies kittled in their cracked brains."

"What said your landlord, the Laird of St Ronan's, to all this?" said Tyrrel.

"Is't *my* landlord ye are asking after, Maister Francie?—The Laird of St Ronan's is nae landlord of mine, and I think ye might hae minded that.—Na, na, thanks be to Praise! Meg Dods is baith landlord and landlady. Ill eneugh to keep the doors open as it is, let be facing Whitsunday and Martinmas—an auld leather pock there is, Maister Francie, in ane of worthy Maister Bindloose, the sheriff-clerk's pigeon-holes, in his dowcot of a closet in the burgh; and therein is baith charter and sasine, and special service to boot; and that will be chapter and verse, speer when ye list."

"I had quite forgotten," said Tyrrel, "that the inn was your own; though I remember you were a considerable landed proprietor."

"May be I am," replied Meg, "may be I am not; and if I be, what for no?—But as to what the laird, whose grandfather was my father's landlord, said to the new doings yonder—he just jumped at the ready penny, like a cock at a grosart, and feu'd the bonnie holm beside the

Well, that they ca'd the Saint's of Wellholm, that was like the best land in his aught, to be carved, and bigged, and howked up, just at the pleasure of Jock Ashler the stane-mason, that ca's himsel an arkitect—there's nae living for new words in this new warld neither, and that is another vex to auld folks such as me.—It's a shame o' the young Laird, to let his auld patrimony gang the gate it is like to gang, and my heart is sair to see't, though it has but little cause to care what comes of him or his."

"Is it the same Mr Mowbray," said Mr Tyrrel, "who still holds the estate?—the old gentleman, you know, whom I had some dispute with——"

"About hunting moor-fowl upon the Springwell-head muirs," said Meg. "Ah lad! honest Mr Bindloose brought you neatly off there—Na, it was nae that honest man, but his son John Mowbray—the t'other has slept down by in Saint Ronan's Kirk for these six or seven years."

"Did he leave," asked Tyrrel, with something of a faltering voice, "no other child than the present laird?"

"No other son," said Meg; "and there's e'en eneugh, unless he could have left a better ane."

"He died then," said Tyrrel, "excepting this son, without children?"

"By your leave, no!" said Meg; "there is the lassie Miss Clara, that keeps house for the laird, if it can be ca'd keeping house, for he is almost aye down at the Well yonder—so a sma' kitchen serves them at the Shaws."

"Miss Clara will have but a dull time of it there during her brother's absence?" said the stranger.

"Out no!—he has her aften jinketting about, and back and forward, wi' a' the fine flichtering fools that come yonder; and clapping palms wi' them, and linking at their dances and daffings. I wuss nae ill come o't, but it's a shame her father's daughter should keep company wi' a' that scauff and raff of students, and writers' 'prentices, and bagmen, and sic-like trash as are down at the Well yonder."

"You are severe, Meg," replied the guest. "No doubt Miss Clara's conduct deserves all sort of freedom."

"I am saying naething against her conduct," said the dame; "and there's nae ground to say ony thing that I ken of—But I wad hae like draw to like, Mr Francie.—I never quarrelled the ball that the gentry used to hae at my bit house a gude wheen years bygane—when they came, the auld folks in their coaches, wi' lang-tailed black horses, and a wheen gaillard gallants on their hunting horses, and mony a decent leddy behind her ain goodman, and mony a bonny smirking lassie on her pownie, and wha sae happy as they—And what for no? And then there was the farmers' ball, wi' the tight lads of yeomen with the brank new blues and buckskins—These were decent meetings—but then they were a' ae man's bairns that were at them, ilk ane ken'd ilk other—they danced farmers wi' farmers' daughters, at the tane, and gentles wi' gentle blood, at the t'other, unless maybe when some of the gentlemen of the Kilnakelty club would give me a round of the floor mysel, in the way of daffing and fun, and me no able to flyte on them for laughing—I am sure I never grudged these innocent pleasures, although it has cost me maybe

a week's redding up, ere I got the better of the confusion."

"But, dame," said Tyrrel, "this ceremonial would be a little hard upon strangers like myself, for how were we to find partners in these family parties of yours?"

"Never you fash your thumb about that, Maister Francie," returned the landlady, with a knowing wink.—"Every Jack will find a Jill, gang the world as it may—and, at the warst o't, better hae some fashery in finding a partner for the night, than get yoked with ane that you may not be able to shake off the morn."

"And does that sometimes happen?" asked the stranger.

"Happen!—and is't amang the Well folk that you mean?" exclaimed the hostess. "Was it not the last season, as they ca't, no farther gane, that young Sir Bingo Binks, the English lad wi' the red coat, that keeps a mail-coach, and drives it himsell, gat cleekit with Miss Rachel Bonnyrigg, the auld Lady Loupengirth's lang-legged daughter—and they danced sae lang thegither, that there was mair said than suld hae

been said about it—and the lad would fain have louped back, but the auld leddy held him to his tackle, and the Commissary Court and somebody else made her Leddy Binks in spite of Sir Bingo's heart—and he has never daured take her to his friends in England, but they have just wintered and summered it at the Well ever since—and that is what the Well is good for!"

"And does Clara,—I mean does Miss Mowbray, keep company with such women as these?" said Tyrrel, with a tone of interest which he checked as he proceeded with the question.

"What can she do, puir thing!" said the dame. "She maun keep the company that her brother keeps, for she is clearly dependent.—But, speaking of that, I ken what *I* have to do, and that is no little, before it darkens.—I have sat clavering with you ower lang, Maister Francie."

And away she marched with a resolved step, and soon the clear octaves of her voice were heard in shrill admonition to her hand-maidens.

Tyrrel paused a moment in deep thought, then took his hat, paid a visit to the stable, where his horse saluted him with feathering ears, and that

low amicable neigh, with which that animal acknowledges the approach of a loving and beloved friend. Having seen that the faithful creature was in every respect attended to, Tyrrel availed himself of the continued and lingering twilight, to visit the old Castle, which, upon former occasions, had been his favourite evening walk. He remained while the light permitted, admiring the prospect we attempted to describe in the first chapter, and comparing, as in his former reverie, the faded hues of the glimmering landscape to those of human life, when early youth and hope have ceased to gild them.

A brisk walk to the inn, and a light supper on a Welsh rabbit and the dame's home-brewed, were stimulants of livelier, at least more resigned thoughts—and the Blue bed-room, to the honours of which he had been promoted, received him a contented, if not a cheerful tenant.

CHAPTER III.

ADMINISTRATION.

There must be government in all society—
Bees have their Queen, and stag herds have their leader;
Rome had her Consuls, Athens had her Archons,
And we, sir, have our Managing Committee.
The Album of St Ronan's.

Francis Tyrrel was, in the course of the next day, formally settled in his own old quarters, where he announced his purpose of remaining for several days. The old-established carrier of the place brought his fishing-rod and travelling-trunk, with a letter to Meg, dated a week previously, desiring her to prepare to receive an old acquaintance. This annunciation, though something of the latest, Meg received with great complacency, observing, it was a civil attention in Maister Tirl; and that John Hislop, though he was not just sae fast, was far surer than ony post

of them a', or express either. She also observed with satisfaction, that there was no gun-case along with her guest's baggage; "for that weary gunning had brought him and her into trouble—the lairds had cried out upon't, as if she made her house a houff for common fowlers and poachers; and yet how could she help twa daft hempie callants from taking a start and an owerloup? They had been ower the neighbour's ground they had leave on up to the march, and they werena just to ken meiths when the moorfowl got up."

In a day or two, her guest fell into such quiet and solitary habits, that Meg, herself the most restless and bustling of human creatures, began to be vexed, for want of the trouble which she expected to have had with him, experiencing, perhaps, the same sort of feeling, from his extreme and passive indifference on all points, that a good horseman has for the over-patient steed, which he can scarce feel under him. His walks were devoted to the most solitary recesses among the neighbouring woods and hills—his fishing-rod was often left behind him, or carried merely as a

apology for sauntering slowly by the banks of some little brooklet—and his success so indifferent, that Meg said the piper of Peebles would have killed a creelfull before Maister Francie made out the half-dozen; so that he was obliged, for peace's sake, to vindicate his character, by killing a handsome salmon.

Tyrrel's painting, as Meg called it, went on equally slowly: He often, indeed, shewed her the sketches which he brought from his walks, and used to finish at home; but Meg held them very cheap. What signified, she said, a wheen scrapes of paper, wi' black and white skarts upon them, that he ca'd bushes, and trees, and craigs!—Couldna he paint them wi' green, and blue, and yellow, like the other folk? "Ye will never mak your bread that way, Maister Francie. Ye suld munt up a muckle square of canvas, like Dick Tinto, and paint folks ainsells, that they like muckle better to see than ony craig in the hail water; and I wadna muckle objeck even to some of the wallers coming up and sitting to ye. They waste their time waur, I wis—and, I warrant, ye might mak a guinea a-head of them.

Dick made twa, but he was an auld used hand, and folk maun creep before they gang."

In answer to these remonstrances, Tyrrel assured her, that the sketches with which he busied himself were held of such considerable value, that very often an artist in that line received much more high remuneration for these, than for portraits or coloured drawings. He added, that they were often taken for the purpose of illustrating popular poems, and hinted as if he himself was engaged in some labour of that nature.

Eagerly did Meg long to pour forth to Nelly Trotter, the fishwoman,—whose cart formed the only neutral channel of communication between the Auld Town and the Well, and who was in favour with Meg, because, as Nelly passed her door in her way to the Well, she always had the first choice of her fish,—the merits of her lodger as an artist. Luckie Dods had, in truth, been so much annoyed and bullied, as it were, with the report of clever persons, accomplished in all sorts of excellence, arriving day after day at the Hotel, that she was overjoyed in this fortunate opportunity to triumph over them in their own

way; and it may be believed, that the xcellencies of her lodger lost nothing by being trumpeted through her mouth.

"I maun hae the best of the cart, Nelly—if you and me can gree—for it is for ane of the best of painters. Your fine folk down yonder would gie their lugs to look at what he has been doing—he gets gowd in goupins, for three downright skarts and three cross anes—And he is no an ungrateful loon, like Dick Tinto, that had nae sooner my good five-and-twenty shillings in his pocket, than he gaed down to birl it awa' at their bonny hottle yonder, but a decent quiet lad, that kens when he is weel aff, and bides still at the auld howff—And what for no?—Tell them all this, and hear what they will say till't."

"Indeed, mistress, I can tell ye that already, without stirring my shanks for the matter," answered Nelly Trotter; "they will e'en say that ye are ae auld fule, and me anither, that may hae some judgment in cock-bree or in scate-rumples, but maunna fash our beards about ony thing else."

"Wad they say sae, the frontless villains!

and me been a housekeeper this thirty years!" exclaimed Meg; "I wadna hae them say it to my face. But I am no speaking without warrant—for what an I had spoken to the minister, lass, and shewn him ane of the loose skarts of paper that Maister Tirl leaves fleeing about his room?—and what an he had said he had kenn'd Lord Bidmore gie five guines for the waur on't? and a' the warld kens he was lang tutor in the Bidmore family."

"Troth," answered her gossip, "I doubt if I was to tell a' this they would hardly believe me, mistress; for there are sae mony judges amang them, and they think sae muckle of themselves, and sae little of other folk, that unless ye were to send down the bit picture, I am no thinking they will believe a word that I can tell them."

"No believe what an honest woman says—let a be to say twa o' them?" exclaimed Meg; "O the unbelieving generation!—Weel, Nelly, since my back is up, ye sall tak down the picture, or sketching, or whatever it is; (though I thought sketchers were aye made of airn,) and shame wi' it the conceited crew that they are.—But see and

bring't back wi' ye again, Nelly, for it's a thing of value; and trustna it out o' your hand, *that* I charge you, for I lippen no muckle to their honesty.—And, Nelly, ye may tell them he has an illustrated poem—*illustrated*—mind the word, Nelly—that is to be stuck as fou o' the like o' that, as ever turkey was larded wi' dabs o' bacon."

Thus furnished with her credentials, and acting the part of a herald betwixt two hostile countries, honest Nelly switched her little fish-cart downwards to St Ronan's Well.

In watering-places, as in other congregated assemblies of the human species, various kinds of government have been dictated by chance, caprice, or convenience; but, in almost all of them, some sort of direction has been adopted to prevent the consequences of anarchy. Sometimes the sole power has been vested in a Master of Ceremonies; but this, like other despotisms, has been of late unfashionable, and the powers of this great officer have been much limited even at Bath, where Nash once ruled with undisputed supremacy. Committees of management, chosen from among the most steady guests, have been in

general resorted to, as a more liberal mode of sway, and to such was confided the administration of the infant republic of St Ronan's Well. This little senate, it must be observed, had the more difficult task in discharging their high duties, that, like those of other republics, their subjects were divided into two jarring and contending factions, who every day eat, drank, danced, and made merry together, hating each other all the while with all the animosity of political party, endeavouring, by every art, to secure the adherence of each guest who arrived, and ridiculing the absurdities and follies of each other, with all the wit and bitterness of which they were masters.

At the head of one of these parties, was no less a personage than Lady Penelope Penfeather, to whom the establishment owed its fame, nay, its existence; and whose influence could only have been balanced by that of the Lord of the Manor, Mr Mowbray of St Ronan's, or, as he was called usually by the company, The Squire, who was the leader of the faction.

The rank and fortune of the lady, her pretensions to beauty as well as talent, (though the former

was something faded,) and the consequence which she arrogated to herself as a woman of fashion, drew round her painters, and poets, and philosophers, and men of science, and lecturers, and foreign adventurers, *et hoc genus omne.*

On the contrary, the Squire's influence as a man of family and property, in the immediate neighbourhood, who actually kept greyhounds, and at least talked of hunters and of racers, ascertained him the support of the whole class of bucks, half and whole bred, from the three next counties; and if more inducements were wanting, he could grant his favourites the privilege of shooting over his moors, which is enough to turn the head of a young Scotchman at any time. Mr Mowbray was of late especially supported in his pre-eminence, by a close alliance with Sir Bingo Binks, a sapient English Baronet, who, ashamed, as many thought, to return to his own country, had sat him down at the Well of St Ronan's, to enjoy the blessing which the Caledonian Hymen had so kindly forced on him, in the person of Miss Rachel Bonnyrigg. As this gentleman actually drove a regular-built mail-coach, not in any respect differing from that of his Majesty,

only that it was more frequently overturned, his influence with a certain set was irresistible, and the Squire of St Ronan's having the better sense of the two, contrived to reap the full benefit of the consequence attached to his friendship.

These two contending parties were so equally balanced, that the predominance of the influence of either was often determined by the course of the sun. Thus, in the morning and forenoon, when Lady Penelope led forth her herd to lawn and shady bower, whether to visit some ruined monument of ancient times, or eat their pic-nic luncheon, to spoil good paper with bad drawings, and good verses with repetition—In a word,

To rave, recite, and madden round the land,

her ladyship's empire over the loungers seemed uncontrouled and absolute, and all things were engaged in the *tourbillon*, of which she formed the pivot and centre. Even the hunters, and shooters, and hard drinkers, were sometimes fain reluctantly to follow in her train, sulking, and quizzing, and flouting at her solemn festivals, besides encouraging the younger nymphs to giggle when they should have looked sentimental. But

installed First Physician and Man of Science, which last qualification he could apply to all purposes, from the boiling of an egg to the giving a lecture. He was, indeed, qualified, like many of his profession, to spread both the bane and antidote before a dyspeptic patient, being as knowing a gastronome as Dr Redgill himself, or any other worthy physician who has written for the benefit of the *cuisine*, from Dr Moncrieff of Tippermalloch, to the late Dr Hunter of York, and Dr Kitchiner of London. But pluralities are always invidious, and therefore the Doctor prudently relinquished the office of caterer and head-carver to the Man of Taste, who occupied regularly, and *ex officio*, the head of the table, reserving to himself the occasional privilege of criticising, and a principal share in consuming, the good things which the common entertainment afforded. We have only to sum up this brief account of the learned Doctor, by informing the reader, that he was a tall, lean, beetle-browed man, with an ill-made black scratch-wig, that stared out on either side from his lantern jaws. He resided nine months out of the twelve

at St Ronan's, and was supposed to make an indifferent good thing of it, especially as he played whist to admiration.

First in place, though perhaps second to the Doctor in real authority, was Mr Winterblossom; a civil sort of person, who was nicely precise in his address, wore his hair 'cued, and dressed with powder, had knee-buckles set with Bristol stones, and a seal-ring as large as Sir John Falstaff's. In his heyday he had a small estate, which he had spent like a gentleman, by mixing with the gay world. He was, in short, one of those respectable links which connect the coxcombs of the present day with those of the last age, and could compare, in his own experience, the follies of both. In latter days, he had sense enough to extricate himself from his course of dissipation, though with impaired health and impoverished fortune.

Mr Winterblossom now lived upon a moderate annuity, and had discovered a way of reconciling his economy with much company and made dishes, by acting as perpetual president of the table-d'hote at the Well. Here he used to

amuse the society by telling stories about Garrick, Foote, Bonnel Thornton, and Lord Kellie, and delivering his opinions in matters of taste and vertu. An excellent carver, he knew how to help each guest to what was precisely his due; and never failed to reserve a proper slice as the reward of his own labours. To conclude, he was possessed of some taste in the fine arts, at least in painting and music, although it was rather of the technical kind, than that which warms the heart and elevates the feelings. There was, indeed, about Mr Winterblossom, nothing that was either warm or elevated. He was shrewd, selfish, and sensual; the last of which qualities he screened from observation, under a specious varnish of exterior complaisance. Therefore, in his professed and apparent anxiety to do the honours of the table, to the most punctilious point of good breeding, he never permitted the attendants upon the public taste to supply the wants of others until all his own private comforts had been fully arranged and provided for.

Mr Winterblossom was also distinguished for possessing a few curious engravings, and other

specimens of art, with the exhibition of which he occasionally beguiled a wet morning at the public room. They were collected, "*viis et modis*," said the Man of Law, another distinguished member of the Committee, with a knowing cock of his eye to his next neighbour.

Of this person little need be said. He was a large-boned, loud-voiced, red-faced old man, named Micklewham; a country writer, or attorney, who managed the matters of the Squire much to the profit of one or other,—if not of both. His nose projected from the front of his broad vulgar face, like the style of an old sun-dial, twisted all of one side. He was as great a bully in his profession, as if it had been military instead of civil; conducted the whole technicalities concerning the cutting up the Saint's-Well haugh, so much lamented by Dame Dods, into building stances, and was on excellent terms with Doctor Quackleben, who always recommended him to make the wills of his patients.

After the Man of Law comes Captain Mungo MacTurk, a Highland lieutenant on half-pay, and that of ancient standing; one who preferred

toddy of the strongest to wine, and in that fashion and cold drams finished about a bottle of whisky *per diem*, whenever he could come by it. He was called the Man of Peace, on the same principle which assigns to constables, Bow-street runners, and such like, who are perpetually and officially employed in scenes of riot, the title of peace-officers—that is, because by his valour he compelled others to act with discretion. He was the general referee in all those abortive quarrels, which, at a place of this kind, are so apt to occur at night, and to be quietly settled in the morning; and occasionally adopted a quarrel himself, by way of taking down any guest who was unusually pugnacious. This occupation procured Captain MacTurk a good deal of respect at the Well; for he was precisely that sort of person, who is ready to fight with any one—whom no one could find an apology for declining to fight with,—in fighting with whom considerable danger was incurred, for he was ever and anon shewing that he could snuff a candle with a pistol ball,—and lastly, through fighting with whom no eclat or credit could redound to the antago-

nist. He always wore a blue coat and red collar, had a supercilious taciturnity of manner, ate sliced leeks with his cheese, and resembled in complexion a Dutch red-herring.

Still remains to be mentioned the Man of Religion—the gentle Mr Simon Chatterley, who had strayed to St Ronan's Well from the banks of Cam or Isis, and who piqued himself, first on his Greek, and secondly, on his politeness to the ladies. During all the week days, as Dame Dods has already hinted, this reverend gentleman was the partner at the whist-table, or in the ball-room, to what maid or matron soever lacked a partner at either; and on the Sundays, he read prayers in the public room to all who chose to attend. He was also a deviser of charades, and an unriddler of riddles; he played a little on the flute, and was Mr Winterblossom's principal assistant in contriving those ingenious and romantic paths, by which, as by the zig-zags which connect military parallels, you were enabled to ascend to the top of the hill behind the hotel, which commands so beautiful a prospect, at exactly that precise angle of ascent,

which entitles a gentleman to offer his arm, and a lady to accept it with perfect propriety.

There was yet another member of this Select Committee, Mr Michael Meredith, who might be termed the Man of Mirth, or, if you please, the Jack Pudding to the company, whose business it was to crack the best joke, and sing the best song,—he could. Unluckily, however, this functionary was for the present obliged to absent himself from St Ronan's; for, not recollecting that he did not actually wear the privileged motley of his profession, he had passed some jest upon Captain MacTurk, which cut so much to the quick, that Mr Meredith was fain to go to goat-whey quarters, at some ten miles distance, and remain there in a sort of concealment, until the affair should be made up through the mediation of his brethren of the Committee.

Such were the honest gentlemen who managed the affairs of this rising settlement, with as much impartiality as could be expected. They were not indeed without their own secret predilections; for the lawyer and the soldier privately inclined to the party of the Squire, while the parson, Mr

Meredith, and Mr Winterblossom, were more devoted to the interests of Lady Penelope; so that Doctor Quackleben alone, who probably recollected that the gentlemen were as liable to stomach complaints, as the ladies to nervous disorders, seemed the only person who preserved in word and deed the most rigid neutrality. Nevertheless, the interests of the establishment being very much at the heart of this honourable council, and each feeling his own profit, pleasure, or comfort, in some degree involved, they suffered not their private affections to interfere with their public duties, but acted each in his own sphere, for the public benefit of the whole community.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INVITATION.

Thus painters write their names at Co.
PRIOR.

THE clamour which attends the removal of dinner from a public room had subsided; the clatter of plates, and knives and forks—the bustling tread of awkward boobies of country servants, kicking each other's shins, and wrangling, as they endeavour to rush out of the door three abreast—the clash of glasses and tumblers, borne to earth in the tumult—the shrieks of the landlady—the curses, not loud, but deep, of the landlord—had all passed away; and those of the company who had servants, had been accommodated by their respective Ganymedes with such remnants of their respective bottles of wine, spirits, &c., as the said

Ganymedes had not previously drunken up, while the rest, broken in to such observance by Mr Winterblossom, waited patiently until the worthy president's own special and multifarious commissions had been executed by a tidy young woman and a lumpish lad, the regular attendants belonging to the house, but whom he permitted to wait on no one, till, as the hymn says,

"All his wants were well supplied."

"And, Dinah—my bottle of pale sherry, Dinah—place it on this side—there is a good girl; —and, Toby—get my jug with the hot water—and let it be boiling—and don't spill it on Lady Penelope, if you can help it, Toby."

"No—for her ladyship has been in hot water to-day already," said the Squire; a sarcasm to which Lady Penelope only replied with a look of contempt.

"And, Dinah, bring the sugar—the soft East India sugar, Dinah—and a lemon, Dinah, one of those which came fresh to-day—Go fetch it from the bar, Toby—and don't tumble down

stairs, if you can help it.—And, Dinah—stay, Dinah—the nutmeg, Dinah, and the ginger, my good girl—And, Dinah—put the cushion up behind my back—and the footstool to my foot, for my toe is something the worse of my walk with your ladyship this morning to the top of Belvidere."

"Her ladyship may call it what she pleases in common parlance," said the writer; "but it must stand Munt-grunzie in the stamped paper, being so nominated in the ancient writs and evidents thereof."

"And, Dinah," continued the president, "lift up my handkerchief—and—a bit of biscuit, Dinah—and—and I do not think I want any thing else—Look to the company, my good girl.—I have the honour to drink the company's very good health—Will your ladyship honour me by accepting a glass of negus?—I learned to make negus from old Dartineuf's son.—He always used East India sugar, and added a tamarind—it improves the flavour infinitely.—Dinah, see your father sends for some tamarinds—Darti-

neuf knew a good thing almost as well as his father—I met him at Bath in the year—let me see —Garrick was just taking leave, and that was in," &c. &c. &c.—" And what is this now, Dinah?" he said, as she put into his hand a roll of paper.

" Something that Nelly Trotter (Trotting Nelly, as the company called her,) brought from a sketching gentleman that lives at the woman's (thus bluntly did the upstart minx describe the reverend Mrs Margaret Dods,) at the Cleek'um of Aultoun yonder"—A name, by the way, which the inn had acquired from the use which the saint upon the sign-post was making of his pastoral crook.

" Indeed, Dinah?" said Mr Winterblossom, gravely taking out his spectacles, and wiping them before he opened the roll of paper; " some boy's daubing, I suppose, whose pa and ma wish to get him into the Trustees' School, and so are beating about for a little interest.—But I am drained dry—I put three lads in last season; and if it had not been my particular interest with the secretary, who asks my opinion now and then, I could not have managed it. But

giff gaff, says I.—Eh! What, in the devil's name, is this?—Here is both force and keeping—Who can this be, my lady?—Do but see the sky-line —why, this is really a little bit—an exquisite little bit—Who the devil can it be? and how can he have stumbled upon the dog-hole in the Old Town, and the snarling b——I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons—that kennels there?"

"I dare say, my lady," said a little miss of fourteen, her eyes growing rounder and rounder, and her cheeks redder and redder, as she found herself speaking, and so many folks listening— "O la! I dare say it is the same gentleman we met one day in the Low-wood walk, that looked like a gentleman, and yet was none of the company, and that you said was a handsome man."

"I did not say handsome, Maria," replied her ladyship; "ladies never say men are handsome—I only said he looked genteel and interesting."

"And that, my lady," said the young parson, bowing and smiling, "is, I will be judged by the company, the most flattering compliment of

the two—We shall be jealous of this Unknown presently."

"Nay, but," continued the sweetly communicative Maria, with some real and some assumed simplicity, "your ladyship forgets—for you said presently after, you were sure he was no gentleman, for he did not run after you with your glove which you had dropped—and so I went back myself to find your ladyship's glove, and he never offered to help me, and I saw him closer than your ladyship did, and I am sure he is handsome, though he is not very civil."

"You speak a little too much and too loud, miss," said Lady Penelope, a natural blush reinforcing the *nuance* of rouge by which it was usually superseded.

"What say you to that, Squire Mowbray?" said the elegant Sir Bingo Binks.

"A fair challenge to the field, Sir Bingo,' answered the Squire; "when a lady throws down the gauntlet, a gentleman may throw the handkerchief."

"I have always the benefit of *your* best construction, Mr Mowbray," said the lady with

dignity. "I suppose Miss Maria has contrived this pretty story for your amusement. I can hardly answer to Mrs Digges, for bringing her into company where she receives encouragement to behave so."

"Nay, nay, my lady," said the president, "you must let the jest pass by; and since this is really such an admirable sketch, you must honour us with your opinion, whether the company can consistently with propriety make any advances to this man."

"In my opinion," said her ladyship, the angry spot still glowing on her brow; "there are enough of *men* among us already—I wish I could say gentlemen—As matters stand, I see little business *ladies* can have at St Ronan's."

This was an intimation which always brought the Squire back to good-breeding, which he could make use of when he pleased. He deprecated her ladyship's displeasure, until she told him, in returning good-humour, that she really would not trust him unless he brought his sister to be security for his future politeness.

"Clara, my lady," said Mowbray, "is alittle

wilful; and I believe your ladyship must take the task of unharbouring her into your own hands. What say you to a gipsy party up to my old shop?—It is a bachelor's house—you must not expect things in much order; but Clara would be honoured——"

The Lady Penelope eagerly accepted the proposal of something like a party, and, quite reconciled with Mowbray, began to inquire whether she might bring the stranger artist with her; "that is," said her ladyship, looking to Dinah, "if he be a gentleman."

Here Dinah interposed her assurance, "that the gentleman at Meg Dods's was quite and clean a gentleman, and an illustrated poet besides."

"An illustrated poet, Dinah!" said Lady Penelope; "you must mean an illustrious poet."

"I dares to say your ladyship is right," said Dinah, dropping her little curtsey.

A joyous flutter of impatient anxiety was instantly excited through all the blue-stocking faction of the company, nor were the news totally indifferent to the rest of the community. The former belonged to that class, who, like the young

Ascanius, are ever beating about in quest of a tawny lion, though they are much more successful in now and then starting a great bore;* and the others, having left all their own ordinary affairs, and subjects of interest at home, were glad to make a matter of importance of the most trivial occurrence. A mighty poet, said the former class—who could it possibly be?—All names were recited—all Britain scrutinized, from Highland hills to the Lakes of Cumberland—from Sydenham Common to St James's Place—even the Banks of the Bosphorus were explored for some name which might rank under this distinguished epithet.—And then, besides his illustrious poesy, to sketch so inimitably!—who *could* it be? And all the gapers, who had nothing of their own to suggest, answered with the antistrophe, "Who could it be?"

The Claret-club, which comprised the choicest and firmest adherents of Squire Mowbray and

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* The one or the other was equally *in votis* to Ascanius,—

Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem.

Modern Trojans make a great distinction betwixt these two objects of chase.

the Baronet—men who scorned that the reversion of one bottle of wine should furnish forth the feast of to-morrow, though caring nought about either of the fine arts in question, found out an interest of their own, which centered in the same individual.

"I say, little Sir Bingo," said the Squire, "this is the very fellow that we saw down at the Willow-slack on Saturday—he was tog'd gnostically enough, and cast twelve yards of line with one hand—the fly fell like a thistle-down on the water."

"Uich!" answered the party he addressed, in the accent of a dog choking in the collar.

"We saw him pull out the salmon yonder," said Mowbray; "you remember—clean fish—the tide-ticks on his gills—weighed, I dare say, a matter of eighteen pounds."

"Sixteen!" replied Sir Bingo, in the same tone of strangulation.

"None of your rigs, Bing!" said his companion,—"nearer eighteen than sixteen!"

"Nearer sixteen, by ——!"

"Will you go a dozen of blue on it to the company?" said the Squire.

"No, d—— me!" croaked the Baronet—"to our own set I will."

"Then, I say done!" quoth the Squire.

And "Done!" responded the Knight; and out came their red pocket-books.

"But who shall decide the bet?" said the Squire.—"The genius himself, I suppose; they talk of asking him here, but I suppose he will scarce mind quizzes like them."

"Write myself—John Mowbray," said the Baronet.

"You, Baronet!—you write! d—— me, that cock won't fight—you won't?"

"I will," growled Sir Bingo, more articulately than usual.

"Why, you can't!" said Mowbray. "You never wrote a line in your life, save those you were whipped for at school."

"I can write—I will write!" said Sir Bingo. "Two to one I will."

And there the affair rested, for the counsel of the company were in high consultation concerning the most proper manner of opening a communication with the mysterious stranger; and the voice of Mr Winterblossom, whose tones, ori-

ginally fine, age had reduced to falsetto, was calling upon the whole party for "Order, order!" So that the bucks were obliged to lounge in silence, with both arms reclined on the table, and testifying, by coughs and yawns, their indifference to the matters in question, while the rest of the company debated upon them, as if they were matters of life and death.

"A visit from one of the gentlemen—Mr Winterblossom, if he would take the trouble,—in name of the company at large—would, Lady Penelope Penfeather presumed to think, be a necessary preliminary to an invitation."

Mr Winterblossom was "quite of her ladyship's opinion, and would gladly have been the personal representative of the company at St Ronan's Well—but it was up hill—her ladyship knew his tyrant, the gout, was hovering upon the *frontiers*—there were other gentlemen, younger, and more worthy to fly at the ladies' command than an ancient Vulcan like him,—there was the valiant Mars and the eloquent Mercury."

Thus speaking, he bowed to Captain MacTurk and the Rev. Mr Simon Chatterley, and reclined on his chair, sipping his negus with the self-sa-

tisfied smile of one, who, by a pretty speech, has rid himself of a troublesome commission. At the same time, by an act probably of mental absence, he put in his pocket the drawing, which, after circulating around the table, had returned back to the chair of the President, being the point from which it had set out.

"By Cot, madam," said Captain MacTurk, "I should be proud to obey your Leddyship's commands—but, by Cot, I never call first on any man that never called upon me at all, unless it were to carry him a friend's message, or such like."

"Twig the old connoisseur," said the Squire to the Knight.—"He is condiddling the drawing."

"Go it, Johnnie Mowbray—pour it into him," whispered Sir Bingo.

"Thank ye for nothing, Sir Bingo," said the Squire, in the same tone. "Winterblossom is one of us—*was* one of us at least—and won't stand the ironing. He has his Wogdens still, that were right things in his day, and can hit the haystack with the best of us—but stay, they are hallooing on the parson."

They were indeed busied on all hands, to obtain Mr Chatterley's consent to wait on the Genius unknown; but though he smiled and simpered, and was absolutely incapable of saying No, he begged leave, in all humility, to decline that commission. "The truth was," he pleaded in his excuse, "that having one day walked to visit the old Castle of St Ronan's, and returning through the Auld Town, as it was popularly called, he had stopped at the door of the *Cleikum*, (pronounced *Anglice*, with the open diphthong,) in hopes to get a glass of syrup of capillaire, or a draught of something cooling; and had in fact expressed his wishes, and was knocking pretty loudly, when a sash-window was thrown suddenly up, and ere he was aware what was about to happen, he was soused with a deluge of water, (as he said,) while the voice of an old hag from within assured him, that if that did not cool him there was another biding him,—an intimation which induced him to retreat in all haste from the repetition of this shower-bath."

All laughed at the account of the chaplain's misfortune, the history of which seemed to be

wrung from him reluctantly, by the necessity of assigning some weighty cause for declining to execute the ladies' commands. But the Squire and Baronet continued their mirth far longer than decorum allowed, flinging themselves back in their chairs, with their hands thrust into their side-pockets, and their mouths expanded with unrestrained enjoyment, until the sufferer, angry, disconcerted, and endeavouring to look scornful, incurred another general burst of laughter on all hands.

When Mr Winterblossom had succeeded in restoring some degree of order, he found the mishaps of the young divine proved as intimidating as ludicrous. Not one of the company chose to go Envoy Extraordinary to the dominions of Queen Meg, who might be suspected of paying little respect to the sanctity of an ambassador's person. And what was worse, when it was resolved that a civil card from Mr Winterblossom, in the name of the company, should be sent to the stranger, instead of a personal visit, Dinah informed them that she was sure no one about the house could be bribed to carry up a letter of the kind;

for, when such an event had taken place two summers since, Meg, who construed it into an attempt to seduce from her tenement the invited guest, had so handled a plough-boy who carried the letter, that he fled the country-side altogether, and never thought himself safe till he was at a village ten miles off, where it was afterwards learned he enlisted with a recruiting party, chusing rather to face the French than to return within the sphere of Meg's displeasure.

Just while they were agitating this new difficulty, a prodigious clamour was heard without, which, to the first apprehensions of the company, seemed to be Meg, in all her terrors, come to anticipate the proposed invasion. Upon inquiry, however, it proved to be her gossip, Trotting Nelly, or Nelly Trotter, in the act of forcing her way up stairs, against the united strength of the whole household of the hotel, to reclaim Luckie Dods's picture, as she called it. This made the connoisseur's treasure tremble in his pocket, who, thrusting a half-crown into Toby's hand, exhorted him to give it her, and try his influence in keeping her back. Toby, who knew Nelly's na-

ture, put the half-crown into his own pocket, and snatched up a gill-stoup of whisky from the side-board. Thus armed, he boldly confronted the virago, and interposing a *remora*, which was able to check poor Nelly's course in her most determined moods, not only succeeded in averting the immediate storm which approached the company in general, and Mr Winterblossom in particular, but brought the guests the satisfactory information, that Trotting Nelly had agreed, after she had slept out her nap in the barn, to convey their commands to the Unknown of Cleekum of Aultoun.

Mr Winterblossom, therefore, having authenticated his proceedings, by inserting in the Minutes of the Committee the authority which he had received, wrote his card in the best style of diplomacy, and sealed it with the seal of the Spa, which represented something like a nymph, seated beside what was designed to represent an urn.

The rival factions, however, did not trust intirely to this official invitation. Lady Penelope was of opinion that they should find some way

of letting the stranger—a man of talent unquestionably—understand that there were in the society to which he was invited, spirits of a more select sort, who felt worthy to intrude themselves on his solitude.

Accordingly, her ladyship imposed upon the elegant Mr Chatterley the task of expressing the desire of the company to see the unknown artist, in a neat occasional copy of verses. The poor gentleman's muse, however, proved unpropitious; for he was able to proceed no further than two lines in half an hour, which, coupled with its variations, we insert from the blotted manuscript, as Dr Johnson has printed the alterations in Pope's version of the Iliad:

1. Maids. 2. Dames. *unity joining.*
The [nymphs] of St Ronan's [in purpose combining]
1. Swain. 2. Man.
To the [youth] who is great both in verse and designing,
- - - - - - - - dining.

The eloquence of a prose billet was necessarily resorted to in the absence of the heavenly muse, and the said billet was secretly intrusted to the care of Trotting Nelly. The same trusty emissary, when refreshed by her nap among the pease-

straw, and about to harness her cart for her return to the sea-coast, (in the course of which she wás to pass the Aultoun,) received another card, written, as he had threatened, by Sir Bingo Binks himself, who had given himself this trouble to secure the settlement of the bet; conjecturing that a man with a fashionable exteriòr, who could throw twelve yards of line at a cast with such precision, might consider the invitation of Winterblossom as that of an old twaddler, and care as little for the good graces of an affected blue-stocking and her *côterie*, whose conversation, in Sir Bingo's mind, relished of nothing but of weak tea and bread and butter. Thus the happy Mr Francis Tyrrel received, considerably to his surprise, no less than three invitations at once from the Well of St Ronan's.

CHAPTER V.

EPISTOLARY ELOQUENCE.

But how can I answer, since first I must read thee?
PRIOR.

DESIROUS of authenticating our more important facts, by as many original documents as possible, we have, after much research, enabled ourselves to present the reader with the following accurate transcripts of the notes intrusted to the care of Trotting Nelly. The first ran thus:

"Mr Winterblossom [of Silverhed] has the commands of Lady Penelope Penfeather, Sir Bingo and Lady Binks, Mr and Miss Mowbray [of St Ronan's,] and the rest of the company at the Hotel and Tontine Inn of St Ronan's Well, to express their hope that the gentleman lodged at the

Cleikum Inn, Old Town of St Ronan's, will favour them with his company at the Ordinary, as early and as often as may suit his convenience. The COMPANY think it necessary to send this invitation, because, according to the RULES of the place, the Ordinary can only be attended by such gentlemen and ladies as lodge at St Ronan's Well; but they are happy to make a distinction in favour of a gentleman so distinguished for success in the fine arts as Mr —— ——, residing at Cleikum. If Mr —— —— should be inclined, upon becoming farther acquainted with the COMPANY and RULES of the place, to remove his residence to the Well, Mr Winterblossom, though he would not be understood to commit himself by a positive assurance to that effect, is inclined to hope that an arrangement might be made, notwithstanding the extreme crowd of the season, to accommodate Mr —— —— at the lodging-house, called Lilliput-hall. It will much conduce to facilitate this negotiation, if Mr —— —— would have the goodness to send an exact note of his stature, as Captain Rannletree seems disposed to resign the fold-

ing-bed at Lilliput-hall, on account of his finding it rather deficient in length. Mr Winterblossom begs farther to assure Mr —— —— of the esteem in which he holds his genius, and of his high personal consideration.

For —— ——, Esquire,
Cleikum Inn, Old-Town of
St Ronan's.

The Public Rooms,
Hotel and Tontine, St Ronan's Well,
&c. &c. &c.

The above card was written (we love to be precise in matters concerning orthography,) in a neat, round, clerk-like hand, which, like Mr Winterblossom's character, in many particulars was most accurate and common-place, though betraying an affectation both of flourish and of precision.

The next billet was a contrast to the diplomatic gravity and accuracy of Mr Winterblossom's official communication, and run thus, the young divine's academic jests and classical flowers of eloquence being mingled with some wild flowers from the teeming fancy of Lady Penelope.

"A choir of Dryads and Naiads, assembled at the healing spring of St Ronan's, have learned with surprise that a youth, gifted by Apollo, when the Deity was prodigal, with two of his most esteemed endowments, wanders at will among their domains, frequenting grove and river, without once dreaming of paying homage to its tutelary deities. He is, therefore, summoned to their presence, and prompt obedience will insure him forgiveness; but in case of contumacy, let him beware how he again essays either the lyre or the pallet.

"*Postscript.* The adorable Penelope, long enrolled among the Goddesses for her beauty and virtues, gives Nectar and Ambrosia, which mortals call tea and cake, at the Public Rooms, near the Sacred Spring, on Thursday evening, at eight o'clock, when the Muses never fail to attend. The stranger's presence is requested to participate in the delights of the evening.

"*Second Postscript.* A shepherd, ambitiously aiming at more accommodation than his narrow cot affords, leaves it in a day or two.

Assuredly the thing is to be hired.

As You Like It.

" *Postscript third.* Our Iris, whom mortals know as Trotting Nelly in her tartan cloak, will bring us the stranger's answer to our celestial summons."

This letter was written in a delicate Italian hand, garnished with fine hair-strokes and dashes, which were sometimes so dexterously thrown off as to represent lyres, pallets, vases, and other appropriate decorations, suited to the tenor of the contents.

The third epistle was a complete contrast to the other two. It was written in a coarse, irregular, school-boy half-text, which, however, seemed to have cost the writer as much pains as if it had been a specimen of the most exquisite calligraphy. And these were the contents:

" SUR—Jack Moobray hasbetted with me that the samon you killed on Saturday last weyd ni to eiteen pounds,—I say nyer sixteen.—So you being a spurtsman, 'tis refer'd.—So hope you will come or send me't; do not doubt you will be on honour. The bet is a dozen of claret, to

be drank at the hotel by our own sett, on Monday next; and we beg you will make one; and Moobray hopes you will come down.—Being, sir, your most humbel servant,—Bingo Binks, Baronet, and of Block-hall.

"*Postscript*—Have sent some loops of Indian gout, also some black hakkels of my groom's dressing; hope they will prove killing, as suiting river and season."

No answer was received to any of these invitations for more than three days; which, while it secretly rather added to than diminished the curiosity of the Wellers concerning the Unknown, occasioned much railing in public against him, as ill-mannered and rude.

Meantime, Francis Tyrrel, to his great surprise, began to find, like the philosophers, that he was never less alone than when alone. In the most silent and sequestered walks, to which the present state of his mind induced him to betake himself, he was sure to find some strollers from the Well, to whom he had become the object of so much solicitous interest. Quite innocent of

the knowledge that he himself possessed the attraction which occasioned his meeting them so frequently, he began to doubt whether the Lady Penelope and her maidens—Mr Winterblossom and his grey pony—the parson and his short black coat and raven-grey pantaloons—were not either actually polygraphic copies of the same individuals, or possessed of a celerity of motion resembling omnipresence and ubiquity; for nowhere could he go without meeting them, and that oftener than once a day, in the course of his walks. Sometimes the presence of the sweet Lycoris was intimated by the sweet prattle in an adjacent shade; sometimes, when Tyrrel thought himself most solitary, the parson's flute was heard snoring forth Gramachree Molly; and if he betook himself to the river, he was pretty sure to find his sport watched by Sir Bingo or some of his friends.

The efforts which Tyrrel made to escape from this persecution, and the impatience of it which his manner indicated, procured him, among the Wellers, the name of the *Misanthrope*; and, once distinguished as an object of curiosity, he was the

person most attended to, who could at the ordinary of the day give the most accurate account of where the Misanthrope had been, and how occupied in the course of the morning. And so far was Tyrrel's shyness from diminishing the desire of the Wellers for his society, that the latter feeling increased with the difficulty of gratification,—as the angler feels the most peculiar interest when throwing his fly for the most cunning and considerate trout in the pool.

In short, such was the interest which the excited imaginations of the company took in the Misanthrope, that, notwithstanding the unamiable qualities which the word expresses, there was only one of the society who did not desire to see the specimen at their rooms, for the purpose of examining him closely and at leisure; and the ladies were particularly desirous to inquire whether he was actually a Misanthrope? Whether he had been always a Misanthrope? What had induced him to become a Misanthrope? And whether there were no means of inducing him to cease to be a Misanthrope?

One individual only, as we have said, nei-

ther desired to see or hear more of the supposed Timon of Cleikum, and that was Mr Mowbray of St Ronan's. Through the medium of that venerable character John Pirner, professed weaver and practical black-fisher in the Aultoun of St Ronan's, who usually attended Tyrrel, to shew him the casts of the river, carry his bag, and so forth, the Squire had ascertained that the judgment of Sir Bingo regarding the disputed weight of the fish was more correct than his own. This inferred an immediate loss of honour, besides the payment of a heavy bill. And the consequences might be yet more serious; nothing short of the emancipation of Sir Bingo, who had hitherto been his convenient shadow and adherent, but who, if triumphant, confiding in his superiority of judgment upon so important a point, might either cut him altogether, or expect that, in future, the Squire, who had long seemed the planet of their set, should be content to roll around himself, Sir Bingo, in the capacity of a satellite.

The Squire, therefore, devoutly hoped, that Tyrrel's restive disposition might continue, to

prevent the decision of the bet, while, at the same time, he nourished a very reasonable degree of dislike to that stranger, who had been the direct occasion of the unpleasant predicament in which he found himself, by not catching a salmon weighing a pound heavier. He therefore openly censured the meanness of those who proposed taking further notice of Tyrrel, and referred to the unanswered letters, as a piece of impertinence which announced him to be no gentleman.

But though appearances were against him, and though he was in truth naturally inclined to solitude, and averse to the affectation and bustle of such a society, that part of Tyrrel's behaviour which indicated ill-breeding was easily accounted for, by his never having received the letters which required an answer. Trotting Nelly, whether unwilling to face her gossip, Meg Dods, without bringing back the drawing, or whether oblivious through the influence of the double dram with which she had been indulged at the Well, jumbled off with her cart to her beloved village of Scate-raw, from which she transmitted the letters by the first bare-legged gillie who travelled to-

wards Aultoun of St Ronan's; so that at last, but after a long delay, they reached the Cleikum Inn and the hands of Mr Tyrrel.

The arrival of these documents explained some part of the oddity of behaviour which had surprised him in his neighbours of the Well; and as he saw they had got somehow an idea of his being a lion extraordinary, and was sensible that such is a character equally ridiculous, and difficult to support, he hastened to write to Mr Winterblossom a card in the style of ordinary mortals. In this he stated the delay occasioned by miscarriage of the letter, and his regret on that account—expressed his intention of dining with the company at the Well on the succeeding day, while he regretted that other circumstances, as well as the state of his health and spirits, would permit him this honour very infrequently during his residence in the country, and begged no trouble might be taken about his accommodation at the Well, as he was perfectly satisfied with his present residence. A separate note to Sir Bingo, said he was happy he could verify the weight of the fish, which he had noted in his diary; ("D—n the fellow, does he keep a dairy?"

said the Baronet,) and though the result could only be particularly agreeable to one party, he should wish both winner and loser mirth with their wine; —he was sorry he was unable to promise himself the pleasure in participating in either. Inclosed was a signed note of the weight of the fish. Armed with this, Sir Bingo claimed his wine—triumphed in his judgment—swore louder and more articulately than ever he was known to utter any previous sounds, that this Tyrrel was a devilish honest fellow, and he trusted to be better acquainted with him; while the crest-fallen Squire, privately cursing the stranger by all his gods, had no mode of silencing his companion but by allowing his loss, and fixing a day for discussing the bet.

In the public rooms the *Company* examined even microscopically the response of the stranger to Mr Winterblossom, straining their ingenuity to discover in the most ordinary expressions, a deeper and esoteric meaning, expressive of something mysterious, and not meant to meet the eye. Mr Meicklewham, the writer, dwelt on the word *circumstances*, which he read with peculiar emphasis.

"Ah, poor lad!" he concluded, "I doubt he

sits cheaper at Meg Dorts's chimney-corner than he can do with the present company."

Doctor Quackleben, in the manner of a clergyman selecting a word from his text, as that which is to be particularly insisted upon, repeated in an under tone, the words, "*State of health?*—umph —state of health?—Nothing acute—no one has been sent for, must be chronic—tending to gout, perhaps.—Or his shyness to society—light wild eye—irregular step—starting when met suddenly by a stranger, and turning abruptly and angrily away—Pray, Mr Winterblossom, let me have an order to look over the file of newspapers—it's very troublesome that restriction about consulting them."

"You know it is a necessary one, Doctor," said the president; "because so few of the good company read any thing else, that the old newspapers would have been worn to pieces long since."

"Well, well, let me have the order," said the Doctor; "I remember something of a gentleman run away from his friends—I must look at the description.—I believe I have a strait-jacket somewhere about the Dispensary."

While this suggestion appalled the male part of the company, who did not much relish the approaching dinner with a gentleman whose situation seemed so precarious, some of the younger Misses whispered to each other—"Ah, poor fellow!—and if it be as the Doctor supposes, my Lady, who knows what the cause of his illness may have been?—His *spirits* he complains of—ah, poor man!"

And thus, by the ingenious commentaries of the company at the Well, on as plain a note as ever covered the eighth part of a sheet of foolscap, the writer was deprived of his property, his reason, and his heart, "all or either, or one or other of them," as is briefly and distinctly expressed in the law phrase.

In short, so much was said *pro* and *con*, so many ideas started and theories maintained, concerning the disposition and character of the Misanthrope, that, when the company assembled at the usual time, before proceeding to dinner, they doubted, as it seemed, whether the expected addition to their society was to enter the room on

his hands or his feet; and when "Mr Tyrrel" was announced by Toby, at the top of his voice, the gentleman who entered the room had so very little to distinguish him from others, that there was a momentary disappointment. The ladies, in particular, began to doubt whether the compound of talent, misanthropy, madness, and mental sensibility, which they had pictured to themselves, actually was the same with the genteel, and even fashionable-looking man whom they saw before them; who, though in a morning dress, which the distance of his residence, and the freedom of the place, made excusable, had, even in the minute points of his exterior, none of the negligence, or wildness, which might be supposed to attach to the vestments of a misanthropic recluse, whether sane or insane. As he paid his compliments round the circle, the scales seemed to fall from the eyes of those he spoke to; and they saw with surprise, that the exaggerations had existed entirely in their own preconceptions, and that whatever the fortunes, or rank in life, of Mr Tyrrel might be, his manners, without being showy, were gentle-

manlike and pleasing. He returned his thanks to Mr Winterblossom in a manner which made that gentleman recall his best breeding to answer the stranger's address in kind. He then escaped from the awkwardness of remaining the sole object of attention, by gliding gradually among the company,—not like an owl, which seeks to hide itself in a thicket, or an awkward and retired man, shrinking from the society into which he is compelled, but with the air of one who could maintain with ease his part in a higher circle. His address to Lady Penelope was adapted to the romantic tone of Mr Chatterley's epistle, to which it was necessary to allude. He was afraid, he said, he must complain to Juno of the neglect of Iris, for her irregularity in delivery of a certain ethereal command, which he had not dared to answer otherwise than by mute obedience—unless, indeed, as the import of the letter seemed to infer, the invitation was designed for some more gifted individual than he to whom chance had assigned it.

Lady Penelope by her lips, and many of the young ladies with their eyes, assured him there

was no mistake in the matter; that he was really the gifted person whom the nymphs had summoned to their presence, and that they were well acquainted with his talents as a poet and a painter. Tyrrel disclaimed, with earnestness and gravity, the charge of poetry, and professed, that far from attempting the art itself, he "read with reluctance all but the productions of the very first-rate poets, and some of these—he was almost afraid to say—he should have liked better in humble prose."

"You have now only to disown your skill as an artist," said Lady Penelope, "and we must consider Mr Tyrrel as the falsest and most deceitful of his sex, who has a mind to deprive us of the opportunity of benefiting by the productions of his unparalleled endowments. I assure you I shall put my young friends on their guard. Such dissimulation cannot be without its object."

"And I," said Mr Winterblossom, "can produce a piece of real evidence against the culprit."

So saying, he unrolled the sketch which he had filched from Trotting Nelly, and which he

had pared and pasted, (arts in which he was eminent,) so as to take out its creases, repair its breaches, and vamp it as well as my old friend Mrs Weir could have repaired the damages of time on a folio Shakespeare.

"The vara *corpus delicti*," said the writer, grinning and rubbing his hands.

"If you are so good as to call such scratches drawings," said Tyrrel, "I must stand so far confessed. I used to do them for my own amusement; but since my landlady, Mrs Dods, has of late discovered that I gain my livelihood by them, why should I disown it?"

This avowal, made without the least appearance either of shame or *retenue*, seemed to have a striking effect on the whole society. The president's trembling hand stole the sketch back to the portfolio, afraid doubtless it might be claimed in form, or else compensation expected by the artist. Lady Penelope was disconcerted, like a horse when it changes the leading foot in galloping. She had to recede from the respectful and easy footing on which he had contrived to place

himself, to one which might express patronage on her own part, and dependence on Tyrrel's; and this could not be done in a moment.

The Man of Law murmured, "Circumstances—circumstances—I thought so!"

Sir Bingo whispered to his friend the Squire, "Run out—blown up—off the course—pity—d—d pretty fellow he has been!"

"A raff from the beginning!" whispered Mowbray.—"I never thought him anything else!"

"I'll hold ye a *poncy* of that, my dear, and I'll ask him."

"Done, for a poney, provided you ask him in ten minutes," said the Squire; "but you dare not, Bingie—he has a d—d cross game look, with all that civil chaff of his."

"Done," said Sir Bingo, but in a less confident tone than before, and with a determination to proceed with some caution in the matter.—"I have got a rouleau above, and Winterblossom shall hold stakes."

"I have no rouleau," said the Squire; "but I'll fly a cheque on Micklewham.—"See it be

better than your last, for I won't be sky-larked again.—Jack, my boy, you are had."

"Not till the bet's won; and I shall see that walking dandy break your head, Bingie, before that," answered Mowbray. "Best speak to the Captain before hand—it is a hellish scrape you are running into—I'll let you off yet, Bingie, for a guinea forfeit.—See, I am just going to start the tattler."

"Start, and be d—d!" said Sir Bingo. "You are gotten, I assure you o' that, Jack." And with a bow and a shuffle, he went up and introduced himself to the stranger as Sir Bingo Binks.

"Had—honour—write—sir," were the only sounds which his throat, or rather his cravat, seemed to send forth.

"Confound the booby!" thought Mowbray; "he will get out of leading strings, if he goes on at this rate; and doubly confounded be this cursed tramper, who, the Lord knows why, has come hither from the Lord knows where, to drive the pigs through my game."

In the meantime, while his friend stood with his stop-watch in his hand, with a visage length-

ened under the influence of these reflections, Sir Bingo, with an instinctive tact, which self-preservation seemed to dictate to a brain neither the most delicate nor subtle in the world, premised his inquiry by some general remark on fishing and field-sports. With all these, he found Tyrrel more than passably acquainted. Of fishing and shooting, particularly, he spoke with something like enthusiasm; so that Sir Bingo began to hold him in considerable respect, and to assure himself that he could not be, or at least could not originally have been bred, the itinerant artist which he now gave himself out—and this, with the fast lapse of the time, induced him thus to address Tyrrel.—"I say, Mr Tyrrel—why, you have been one of us—I say——"

"If you mean a sportsman, Sir Bingo—I have been, and am a pretty keen one still," replied Tyrrel.

"Why, then, you did not always do them sort of things?"

"What sort of things do you mean, Sir Bingo?" said Tyrrel. "I have not the pleasure of understanding you."

"Why, I mean them sketches," said Sir Bingo. "I'll give you a handsome order for them, if you will tell me. I will, on my honour."

"Does it concern you particularly, Sir Bingo, to know anything of my affairs?"

"No—certainly—not immediately," answered Sir Bingo, with some hesitation, for he liked not the dry tone in which Tyrrel's answers were returned, half so well as a bumper of dry sherry; "only I said you were a d—d gnostic fellow, and I laid a bet you have not been always professional—that's all."

Mr Tyrrel replied, "A bet with Mr Mowbray, I suppose?"

"Yes, with Jack—you have hit—I hope I have done him?"

Tyrrel bent his brows, and looked first at Mr Mowbray, then at the Baronet, and, after a moment's thought, addressed the latter.—"Sir Bingo Binks, you are a gentleman of elegant inquiry and acute judgment.—You are perfectly right—I was *not* bred to the profession of an artist, nor did I practise it formerly, whatever I may do now; and so that question is answered."

"And Jack is diddled," said the Baronet, smiting his thigh in triumph, and turning towards the Squire and the stake-holder, with a smile of exultation.

"Stop a single moment, Sir Bingo," said Tyrrel; "take one word with you. I have a great respect for bets—it is part of an Englishman's charter to bet on what he thinks fit, and to prosecute his inquiries over hedge and ditch, as if he were steeple-hunting. But as I have satisfied you on the subject of two bets, that is sufficient compliance with the custom of the country; and therefore I request, Sir Bingo, you will not make me or my affairs the subject of any more wagers."

"I'll be d—d if I do," was the internal resolution of Sir Bingo. Aloud he muttered some apologies, and was heartily glad that the dinner-bell, sounding at the moment, afforded him an apology for shuffling off in a different direction.

CHAPTER VI.

TABLE-TALK.

And, sir, if these accounts be true,
The Dutch have mighty things in view;
The Austrians—I admire French beans,
Dear ma'am, above all other greens.
*   *   *   *   *   *
And all as lively and as brisk
As—Ma'am, d'ye choose a game at whisk?

Table-Talk.

When they were about to leave the room, Lady Penelope assumed Tyrrel's arm with a sweet smile of condescension, meant to make the honoured party understand in its full extent the favour conferred. But the unreasonable artist, far from intimating the least confusion at an attention so little to be expected, seemed to consider the distinction as one which was naturally

paid to the greatest stranger present; and when he placed Lady Penelope at the head of the table, by Mr Winterblossom the president, and took a chair for himself betwixt her ladyship and Lady Binks, the provoking wretch appeared no more sensible of being exalted above his proper rank in society, than if he had been sitting by honest Mrs Blower from the Bow-head, who had come to the Well to carry off the dregs of the *Inflienzie*, which she scorned to term a surfeit.

Now this indifference puzzled Lady Penelope's game extremely, and irritated her desire to get at the bottom of Tyrrel's mystery, if there was one, and secure him to her own party. If you were ever at a watering-place, reader, you know that while the guests do not always pay the most polite attention to unmarked individuals, the appearance of a stray lion makes an interest as strong as it is reasonable, and the Amazonian chiefs of each coterie, like the hunters of Buenos-Ayres, prepare their cord and their loop, and manœuvre to the best advantage they can, each hoping to noose *the unsuspicious monster, and lead* him captive to her own menagerie. A few words

concerning Lady Penelope Penfeather will explain why she practised this sport with even more than common zeal.

She was the daughter of an earl, possessed a showy person, and features which might be called handsome in youth, though now rather too much *prononcés* to render the term proper. The nose was become sharper; the cheeks had lost the roundness of youth; and as, during fifteen years that she had reigned a beauty and a ruling toast, the right man had not spoken, or, at least, had not spoken at the right time, her ladyship, now rendered sufficiently independent by the inheritance of an old relation, spoke in praise of friendship, began to dislike the town in summer, and to "babble of green fields."

About the time Lady Penelope thus changed the tenor of her life, she was fortunate enough, with Dr Quackleben's assistance, to find out the virtues of St Ronan's spring; and, having contributed her share to establish the *Urbs in rure*, which had risen around it, she sat herself down as leader of the fashions in the little province which she had in a great measure both discovered and

colonized. She was, therefore, justly desirous to compel homage and tribute from all who should approach the territory.

In other respects, Lady Penelope pretty much resembled the numerous class she belonged to She was at bottom a well-principled woman, but too thoughtless to let her principles control her humour, therefore not scrupulously nice in her society. She was good-natured, but capricious and whimsical, and willing enough to be kind or generous, if it neither thwarted her humour, nor cost her much trouble; would have chaperoned a young friend anywhere, and moved the world for subscription tickets; but never troubled herself how much her giddy charge flirted, or with whom, so that, with a numerous class of Misses, her ladyship was the most delightful creature in the world. Then Lady Penelope had lived so much in society, knew so exactly when to speak, and how to escape from an embarrassing discussion by professing ignorance, while she looked intelligence, that she was not generally discovered to be a fool until she set up for being remarkably

clever. This happened more frequently of late, when perhaps, as she could not but observe that the repairs of the toilette became more necessary, she might suppose that new lights, according to the poet, were streaming on her mind through the chinks that Time was making. Many of her friends, however, thought that Lady Penelope had better consulted her genius by remaining in mediocrity, as a fashionable and well-bred woman, than by parading her new-founded pretensions to taste and patronage; but such was not her own opinion, and, doubtless, her ladyship was the best judge.

On the other side of Tyrrel sat Lady Binks, lately the beautiful Miss Bonnyriggs, who, during the last season, had made the company at the Well alternately admire, smile, and stare, by dancing the highest Highland fling, riding the wildest pony, laughing the loudest laugh at the broadest joke, and wearing the briefest petticoat of any nymph of St Ronan's. Few knew that this wild, hoydenish, half-mad humour, was only superinduced over her real character, for the

purpose of—getting well married. She had fixed her eyes on Sir Bingo, and was aware of his maxim, that to catch him, "a girl must be bang up to every thing;" and that he would choose a wife for the neck-or-nothing qualities which recommend a good hunter. She made out her catch-match, and she was miserable. Her wild good humour was entirely an assumed part of her character, which was passionate, ambitious, and thoughtful. Delicacy she had none—she knew Sir Bingo was a brute and a fool, even while she was hunting him down; but she had so far mistaken her own feelings, as not to have expected that when she became bone of his bone, she should feel so much shame and anger when she saw his folly expose him to be laughed at and plundered, or so disgusted when his brutality became intimately connected with herself. It is true, he was on the whole rather an innocent monster; and between bitting and bridling, coaxing and humouring, might have been made to pad on well enough. But the unhappy boggling which had taken place previous to the declaration of their private marriage, had so exasperated her

spirits against her help-mate, that modes of conciliation were the last she was likely to adopt. Not only had the assistance of the Scottish Themis, so propitiously indulgent to the foibles of the fair, been resorted to on the occasion, but even Mars seemed ready to enter upon the tapis, if Hymen had not intervened. There was, *de par le monde*, a certain brother of the lady—an officer—and, as it happened, on leave of absence, —who alighted from a hack chaise at the Fox Hotel, at eleven o'clock at night, holding in his hand a slip of well-dried oak, accompanied by another gentleman, who, like himself, wore a military travelling-cap and a black stock; out of the said chaise, as was reported by the trusty Toby, was handed a small reise-sac, an Andrew Ferrara, and a neat mahogany box, eighteen inches long, three deep, and some six broad. Next morning a solemn *palaver* (as the natives of Madagascar call their national convention,) was held at an unusual hour, at which Captain MacTurk and Mr Mowbray assisted; and the upshot was, that at breakfast the company were made happy by the information, that Sir Bin-

go had been for some weeks the happy bridegroom of their general favourite, which union, concealed for family reasons, he was now at liberty to acknowledge, and to fly with the wings of love to bring his sorrowing turtle from the shades to which she had retired, till the obstacles to their mutual happiness could be removed. Now, though all this sounded very smoothly, that gall-less turtle, Lady Binks, could never think of the tenor of the proceedings without the deepest feelings of resentment and contempt.

Besides all these unpleasant circumstances, Sir Bingo's family had refused to countenance her wish that he should bring her to his own seat; and hence a new shock to her pride, and new matter of contempt against poor Sir Bingo, for being ashamed and afraid to face down the opposition of his kinsfolks, for whose displeasure, though never attending to any good advice from them, he retained a childish awe.

The manners of the young lady were no less changed than was her temper; and, from being much too careless and free, were become reserved,

sullen, and haughty. A consciousness that many scrupled to hold intercourse with her in society, rendered her disagreeably tenacious of her rank, and jealous of everything that appeared like neglect. She had constituted herself mistress of Sir Bingo's purse; and, unrestrained in the expenses of dress and equipage, chose, contrary to her maiden practice, to be rather rich and splendid than gay, and to command that attention by magnificence, which she no longer deigned to solicit by rendering herself either agreeable or entertaining. One secret source of her misery was, the necessity of shewing deference to Lady Penelope Penfeather, whose understanding she despised, and whose pretensions to consequence, to patronage, and to literature, she had acuteness enough to see through, and to contemn; and this dislike was the more grievous, that she felt she depended a good deal on Lady Penelope's countenance for the situation she was able to maintain even among the not very select society of St Ronan's Well; and that, neglected by her, she must have dropped lower in the scale even there. Neither was Lady Penelope's kindness to Lady

Binks extremely cordial. She partook in the ancient and ordinary dislike of single nymphs of a certain age, to those who make splendid alliances under their very eye—and she more than suspected the secret disaffection of the lady. But the name sounded well; and the style in which Lady Binks lived was a credit to the place. So they satisfied their mutual dislike with saying a few sharp things to each other occasionally, but all under the mask of civility.

Such was Lady Binks; and yet, being such, her dress, and her equipage, and carriages, were the envy of half the Misses at the Well, who, while she sat disfiguring with sullenness her very lovely face, (for it was as beautiful as her shape was exquisite,) only thought she was proud of having carried her point, and felt herself, with her large fortune and diamond bandeau, no fit company for the rest of the party. They submitted, therefore, with meekness to her domineering temper, though it was not the less tyrannical, that in her maiden state of hoydenhood, she had been to some of them an object of slight and of censure; and Lady Binks had not

forgotten the offences offered to Miss Bonnyrigs. But the fair sisterhood submitted to her retaliations, as lieutenants endure the bullying of a rough and boisterous captain of the sea, with the secret determination to pay it home to their underlings, when they shall become captains themselves.

In this state of importance, yet of penance, Lady Binks occupied her place at the dinner-table, alternately disconcerted by some stupid speech of her lord and master, and by some slight sarcasm from Lady Penelope, to which she longed to reply, but dared not.

She looked from time to time at her neighbour Frank Tyrrel, but without addressing him, and accepted in silence the usual civilities which he proffered to her. She had remarked keenly his interview with Sir Bingo, and knowing by experience the manner in which her honoured lord was wont to retreat from a dispute in which he was unsuccessful, as well as his genius for getting into such perplexities, she had little doubt that he had sustained from the stranger some new indignity; whom, therefore, she regarded with a mixture of feeling, scarce knowing whether to be

pleased with him for having given pain to him whom she hated, or angry with him for having affronted one in whose degradation her own was necessarily involved. There might be other thoughts—on the whole, she regarded him with much though with mute attention. He paid her but little in return, being almost entirely occupied in replying to the questions of the engrossing Lady Penelope Penfeather.

Receiving polite though rather evasive answers to her inquiries concerning his late avocations, her ladyship could only learn that Tyrrel had been travelling in several remote parts of Europe, and even of Asia. Baffled, but not repulsed, the lady continued her courtesy, by pointing out to him, as a stranger, several individuals of the company to whom she proposed introducing him, as persons from whose society he might derive either profit or amusement. In the midst of this sort of conversation, however, she suddenly stopped short.

"Will you forgive me, Mr Tyrrel," she said, "if I say I have been watching your thoughts for some moments, and that I have detected you?

All the while that I have been talking of these good folks, and that you have been making such civil replies, that they might be with great propriety and utility inserted in the 'Familiar Dialogues, teaching foreigners how to express themselves in English upon ordinary occasions'—your mind has been entirely fixed upon that empty chair, which hath remained there opposite betwixt our worthy president and Sir Bingo Binks."

"I own, madam," he answered, "I was a little surprised at seeing such a distinguished seat unoccupied, while the table is rather crowded."

"O, confess more, sir!—Confess that to a poet a seat unoccupied—the chair of Banquo—has more charms than if it were filled even as an alderman would fill it.—What if 'the Dark Ladye' should glide in and occupy it?—Would you have courage to stand the vision, Mr Tyrrel?—I assure you the thing is not impossible."

"*What* is not impossible, Lady Penelope?" said Tyrrel, somewhat surprised.

"Startled already?—Nay, then, I despair of your enduring the awful interview."

"What interview? who is expected?" said

Tyrrel, unable with the utmost exertion to suppress some signs of curiosity, though he suspected the whole to be merely some mystification of her ladyship.

"How delighted I am," she said, "that I have found out where you are vulnerable!—Expected—did I say expected?—no, not expected.

> 'She glides, like Night, from land to land,
> She hath strange power of speech.'

—But come, I have you at my mercy, and I will be generous and explain.—We call—that is, among ourselves you understand—Miss Clara Mowbray, the sister of that gentleman that sits next to Miss Parker, the Dark Ladie, and that seat is left for her.—For she was expected—no, not expected—I forget again!—but it was thought *possible* she might honour us to-day, when our feast was so full and piquant.—Her brother is our Lord of the Manor—and so they pay her that sort of civility to regard her as a visitor—and neither Lady Binks nor I think of objecting—She is a singular young person, Clara Mowbray—she amuses me very much—I am always rather glad to see her."

"She is not to come hither to-day," said Tyrrel; "am I so to understand your ladyship?"

"Why, it is past her time—even *her* time," said Lady Penelope—"dinner was kept back half an hour, and our poor invalids were famishing, as you may see by the deeds they have done since.—But Clara is an odd creature, and if she took it into her head to come hither at this moment, hither she would come—she is very whimsical.—Many people think her handsome—but she looks so like something from another world, that she makes me always think of Mat Lewis's Spectre Lady."

And she repeated with much cadence,

"There is a thing—there is a thing
  I fain would have from thee;
I fain would have that gay gold ring,
  O warrior, give it me!"

"And then you remember his answer:

"This ring my Lord Brooke from his daughter took,
  And a solemn oath he swore,
That that ladye my bride should be
  When this crusade was o'er."

You do figures as well as landscapes, I suppose, Mr Tyrrel?—You shall make a sketch for me—a slight thing—for sketches, I think, shew the freedom of art better than finished pieces—I dote on the first coruscations of genius—flashing like lightning from the cloud!—You shall make a sketch for my own boudoir—my dear sulky den at Air Castle, and Clara Mowbray shall sit for the Ghost Ladye."

"That would be but a poor compliment to your ladyship's friend," replied Tyrrel.

"Friend? We don't get quite that length, though I like Clara very well.—Quite sentimental cast of face, I think I saw an antique in the Louvre very like her—(I was there in 1800)—quite an antique countenance—eyes something hollowed—care has dug caves for them, but they are caves of the most beautiful marble, arched with jet—a straight nose, and absolutely the Grecian mouth and chin—a profusion of long straight black hair, with the whitest skin you ever saw—as white as the whitest parchment—and not a shade of colour in her cheek—none

whatever—If she would be naughty, and borrow a prudent touch of complexion, she might be called beautiful. Even as it is, many think her so, although surely, Mr Tyrrel, three colours are necessary to the female face. However, we used to call her the Melpomene of the Spring last season, as we called Lady Binks—who was not then Lady Binks—our Euphrosyne—Did we not, my dear?"

"Did we not what, madam?" said Lady Binks, in a tone something sharper than ought to have belonged to so beautiful a countenance.

"I am sorry I have started you out of your reverie, my love," answered Lady Penelope. "I was only assuring Mr Tyrrel that you were once Euphrosyne, though now so much under the banners of Il Penseroso."

"I do not know that I have been either one or the other," answered Lady Binks; "one thing I certainly am not—I am not capable of understanding your ladyship's wit and learning."

"Poor soul," whispered Lady Penelope to Tyrrel; "we know what we are, we know not

what we may be.—And now, Mr Tyrrel, I have been your sibyl to guide you through this Elysium of ours, I think, in reward, I deserve a little confidence in return."

"If I had any to bestow, which could be in the slightest degree interesting to your ladyship," answered Tyrrel.

"Oh! cruel man—he will not understand me!" exclaimed the lady—"In plain words then, a peep into your portfolio—just to see what objects you have rescued from natural decay, and rendered immortal by the pencil. You do not know—indeed, Mr Tyrrel, you do not know how I dote upon your 'serenely silent art,' second to poetry—equal—superior perhaps—to music."

"I really have little that could possibly be worth the attention of such a judge as your ladyship," answered Tyrrel; "such trifles as your ladyship has seen, I sometimes leave at the foot of the tree I have been sketching on them."

"As Orlando left his verses in the Forest of Ardennes?—Oh, the thoughtless prodigality!—Mr Winterblossom, do you hear this?—We

must follow Mr Tyrrel in his walks, and glean what he leaves behind him."

Her ladyship was here disconcerted by some laughter on Sir Bingo's side of the table, which she chastised by an angry glance, and then proceeded emphatically.

"Mr Tyrrel—this must *not* be—this is not the way of the world, my good sir, to which even Genius must stoop its flight. We must consult the engraver—though perhaps you etch as well as you draw?"

"I should suppose so," said Mr Winterblossom, edging in a word with difficulty, "from the freedom of Mr Tyrrel's touch."

"I will not deny my having spoiled a little copper now and then," said Tyrrel, "since I am charged with the crime by such good judges; but it has only been by way of experiment."

"Say no more," said the lady; "my darling wish is accomplished!—We have long desired to have the remarkable and most romantic spots of our little Arcadia here—spots consecrated to friendship, the fine arts, the loves and the graces, immortalized by the graver's art, faithful to its

charge of fame—you shall labour on this task, Mr Tyrrel; we will all assist with notes and illustrations—we will all contribute—only some of us must be permitted to remain anonymous—Fairy favours, you know, Mr Tyrrel, must be kept secret—And you shall be allowed the pillage of the Album—some sweet things there of Mr Chatterley's—and Mr Edgeit, a gentleman of your own profession, I am sure will lend his aid—Dr Quackleben will contribute some scientific notices.—And for subscription——"

"Financial—financial—your leddyship, I speak to order!" said the writer, interrupting Lady Penelope with a tone of impudent familiarity, which was meant doubtless for jocular ease.

"How am I out of order, Mr Meicklewham?" said her ladyship, drawing herself up.

"I speak to order!—No warrants for money can be extracted before intimation to the Committee of Management."

"Pray who mentioned money, Mr Meicklewham?" said her ladyship.—"That wretched old

pettifogger," she added in a whisper to Tyrrel, "thinks of nothing else but the filthy pelf."

"Ye spake of subscription, my leddy, whilk is the same thing as money, differing only in respect of time—the subscription being a contract *de futuro*, and having a *tractus temporis in gremio*—And I have kenn'd mony honest folks in the company at the Well, complain of the subscriptions as a great abuse, as obliging them either to look unlike other folk, or to gie good lawful coin for ballants and picture-books, and things they caredna a pinch o' snuff for."

Several of the company, at the lower end of the table, assented both by nods and murmurs of approbation; and the orator was about to proceed, when Tyrrel with difficulty procured a hearing before the debate went farther, and assured the company that her ladyship's goodness had led her into an error; that he had no work in hand worthy of their patronage, and, with the deepest gratitude for Lady Penelope's goodness, had it not in his power to comply with her request. There was some tittering at her lady-

ship's expence, who, as the writer slyly observed, had been something *ultronious* in her patronage. Without attempting for the moment any rally, (as indeed the time which had passed since the removal of the dinner scarce permitted an opportunity,) Lady Penelope gave the signal for the ladies' retreat, and left the gentlemen to the circulation of the bottle.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TEA-TABLE.

——— While the cups
Which cheer, but not inebriate, wait on each.
COWPER.

IT was common at the Well, for the fair guests occasionally to give tea to the company,—such at least as from their rank and leading in the little society, might be esteemed fit to constitute themselves patronesses of an evening; and the same lady generally carried the authority she had acquired into the ball-room, where two fiddles and a bass, at a guinea a night, with a *quantum sufficit* of tallow candles, (against the use of which Lady Penelope often mutinied,) enabled the company—to use the appropriate phrase—"to close the evening on the light fantastic toe."

On the present occasion, the lion of the hour, Mr Francis Tyrrel, had so little answered the high-wrought expectations of Lady Penelope, that she rather regretted having ever given herself any trouble about him, and particularly that of having manœuvred herself into the patronage of the tea-table for the evening, to the great expenditure of souchong and congo. Accordingly, her ladyship had no sooner summoned her own woman, and her *fille de chambre*, to make tea, with her page, footman, and postillion, to hand it about, (in which duty they were assisted by two richly-laced, and thickly powdered footmen of Lady Binks's, whose liveries put to shame the more modest garb of Lady Penelope's, and even dimmed the glory of the suppressed coronet upon the buttons,) than she began to vilipend and depreciate what had been so long the object of her curiosity.

"This Mr Tyrrel," she said, in a tone of authoritative decision, "seems after all a very ordinary sort of person—quite a common-place man, who, she dared say, had considered his condition, in going to the old ale-house, much bet-

ter than they had done for him, when they asked him to the Public Rooms. He had known his own place better than they did—there was nothing uncommon in his appearance or conversation—nothing at all *frappant*—she scarce believed he could even draw that sketch. Mr Winterblossom, indeed, made a great deal of it; but then all the world knew that every scrap of engraving or drawing, which Mr Winterblossom contrived to make his own, was, the instant it came into his collection, the finest thing that ever was seen—that was the way with collectors—their geese were all swans."

"And your ladyship's swan has proved but a goose, my dearest Lady Pen," said Lady Binks.

"*My* swan, dearest Lady Binks! I really do not know how I have deserved the appropriation."

"Do not be angry, my dear Lady Penelope; I only mean, that for a fortnight and more you have spoke constantly *of* this Mr Tyrrel, and all dinner-time you spoke *to* him."

The fair company began to collect around, at hearing the word *dear* so often repeated in the

same brief dialogue, which induced them to expect sport, and, like the vulgar on a similar occasion, to form a ring for the expected combatants.

"He sat betwixt us, Lady Binks," answered Lady Penelope, with dignity. "You had your usual head-ache, you know, and, for the credit of the company, I spoke for one."

"For *two*, if your ladyship pleases," replied Lady Binks. "I mean," she added, softening the expression, "for yourself and me."

"I am sorry," said Lady Penelope, "I should have spoken for one who can speak so smartly for herself, as my dear Lady Binks—I did not, by any means, desire to engross the conversation—I repeat it, there is a mistake about this man."

"I think there is," said Lady Binks, in a tone which implied something more than mere assent to Lady Penelope's proposition.

"I doubt if he is an artist at all," said the Lady Penelope; "or if he is, he must be doing things for some Magazine, or Encyclopedia, or some such matter."

"*I* doubt, too, if he be a professional artist,"

said Lady Binks. "If so, he is of the very highest class, for I have seldom seen a better-bred man."

"There are very well-bred artists," said Lady Penelope. "It is the profession of a gentleman."

"Certainly," answered Lady Binks; "but the poorer class have often to struggle with poverty and dependance. In general society, they are like commercial people in presence of their customers; and that is a difficult part to sustain. And so you see them of all sorts—shy and reserved when they are conscious of merit—petulant and whimsical, by way of shewing their independence—intrusive, in order to appear easy—and sometimes obsequious and fawning, when they chance to be of a mean spirit. But you seldom see them quite at their ease, and therefore I either hold this Mr Tyrrel to be an artist of the first class, raised completely above the necessity and degradation of patronage, or else to be no professional artist at all."

Lady Penelope looked at Lady Binks with much such a regard as Balaam may have cast upon his ass, when he discovered the animal's

capacity for holding an argument with him. She muttered to herself—

"*Mon ane parle, et même il parle bien!*"

But declining the altercation which Lady Binks seemed disposed to enter into, she replied with good humour, "Well, dearest Rachel, we will not pull caps about this man—nay, I think your good opinion of him gives him new value in my eyes. That is always the way with us, my good friend! We may confess it, when there are none of these conceited male wretches amongst us. We will know what he really is—he shall not wear fern-seed, and walk among us invisible thus—what say you, Maria?"

"Indeed, I say, dear Lady Penelope," answered Miss Digges, whose ready chatter we have already introduced to the reader, "he is a very handsome man, though his nose is too big, and his mouth too wide—but his teeth are like pearl—and he has such eyes!—especially when your ladyship spoke to him. I don't think you looked at his eyes—they are quite deep and dark, and full of glow, like what you read to us in the letter from that lady, about Robert Burns."

"Upon my word, miss, you come on finely," said Lady Penelope.—"One had need take care what they read or talk about before you, I see.—Come, Jones, have mercy upon us—put an end to that symphony of tinkling cups and saucers, and let the first act of the tea-table begin, if you please."

"Does her leddyship mean the grace?" said honest Mrs Blower, for the first time admitted into this worshipful society, and busily employed in arranging an Indian handkerchief, that might have made a main-sail for one of her husband's smuggling luggers, which she spread carefully on her knee, to prevent damage to a flowered silk gown from the repast of tea and cake, to which she proposed to do due honour,—"Does her leddyship mean the grace? I see the minister is just coming in.—Her leddyship waits till ye say a blessing, an ye please, sir."

This was addressed to Mr Simon Chatterley, who had just entered the room with a graceful sliding step. He bent on the honest woman a stare of astonishment through his quizzing-glass, and slid on to the tea-table.

Mr Winterblossom, who *toddled* after the chaplain, his toe having given him an alert hint to quit the dining-table, though he saw every feature in the poor woman's face swoln with desire to procure information concerning the ways and customs of the place, passed on the other side of the way, regardless of her agony of curiosity.

A moment after, she was relieved by the entrance of Dr Quackleben, whose maxim being, that one patient was as well worth attention as another, and who knew by experience, that the *honoraria* of a godly wife of the Bowhead were as apt to be forth-coming, (if not more so,) as my Lady Penelope's, he e'en sat himself quietly down by Mrs Blower, and proceeded with the utmost kindness to inquire after her health, and to hope she had not forgotten taking a table-spoonful of spirits burned to a *residuum*, in order to qualify the crudities.

"Indeed, Doctor," said the honest woman, "I loot the brandy burn as lang as I dought look at the gude creature wasting its sell that gate—and then, when I was fain to put it out for

very thrift, I did take a thimble-full of it, (although it is not the thing I am used to, Dr Quackleben;) and I winna say but that it did me good."

"Unquestionably, madam," said the Doctor. "I am no friend to the use of alcohol in general, but there are particular cases—there are particular cases, Mrs Blower—My venerated instructor, one of the greatest men in our profession that ever lived, took a wine-glass-full of old rum, mixed with sugar, every day after his dinner."

"Ay, dear heart, he would be a comfortable doctor that," said Mrs Blower. "He wad maybe ken something of my case. Is he living, think ye, sir?"

"Dead for many years, madam," said Dr Quackleben; "and there are but few of his pupils that can fill his place, I assure ye. If I could be thought an exception, it is only because I was a favourite. Ah! blessings on the old red cloak of him!—It covered more of the healing science than the gowns of a whole modern university."

"There is ane, sir," said Mrs Blower, "that

has been muckle recommended about Edinburgh —Macgregor, I think they ca' him—folk come far and near to see him."

"I know who you mean, ma'am—a clever man—no denying it—a clever man—but there are certain cases—yours, for example—and I think many that come to drink this water—which I cannot say I think he perfectly understands—hasty—very hasty and rapid. Now I—I give the disease its own way at first—then watch it, Mrs Blower—watch the turn of the tide."

"Ay, troth, that's true," responded the widow; "John Blower was aye watching turn of tide, puir man."

"Then he is a starving Doctor, Mrs Blower—reduces diseases as soldiers do towns—by famine, not considering that the friendly inhabitants suffer as much as the hostile garrison—a-hem!"

Here he gave an important and emphatic cough, and then proceeded.

"I am no friend either to excess or to violent stimulus, Mrs Blower—but nature must be supported—a generous diet—cordials judiciously thrown in—not without the advice of a medical

man—that is my opinion, Mrs Blower, to speak as a friend—others may starve their patients if they have a mind."

"It wadna do for me, the starving, Dr Keekerben," said the alarmed relict,—"it wadna do for me at a'—Just a' I can do to wear through the day with the sma' supports that nature requires—not a soul to look after me, Doctor, since John Blower was taen awa.—Thank ye kindly, sir, (to the servant who handed the tea,)—thank ye, my bonny man, (to the page who served the cake)—Now, dinna ye think, Doctor, (in a low and confidential voice,) that her leddyship's tea is rather of the weakliest—water bewitched, I think—and Mrs Jones, as they ca' her, has cut the seed-cake very thin."

"It is the fashion, Mrs Blower," answered Dr Quackleben; "and her ladyship's tea is excellent. But your taste is a little chilled, which is not uncommon at the first use of the waters, so that you are not sensible of the flavour—we must support the system—reinforce the digestive powers—give me leave—you are a stranger, Mrs Blower, and we must take care of you—I have

an elixir which will put that matter to rights in a moment."

So saying, Dr Quackleben pulled from his pocket a small portable case of medicines—"Catch me without my tools—" he said, "here I have the real useful pharmacopeia—the rest is all humbug and hard names—this little case, with a fortnight or month, spring and fall, at St Ronan's Well, and no one will die till his day come."

Thus boasting, the Doctor drew from his case a large vial or small flask, full of a high-coloured liquid, of which he mixed three tea-spoonfulls in Mrs Blower's cup, who, immediately afterwards, allowed that the flavour was improved beyond all belief, and that it was "vera comfortable and restorative indeed."

"Will it not do good to my complaints, Doctor?" said Mr Winterblossom, who had strolled towards them, and held out his cup to the physician.

"I by no means recommend it, Mr Winterblossom," said Dr Quackleben, shutting up his

case with great coolness; "your case is œdomatous, and you treat it your own way—you are as good a physician as I am, and I never interfere with another practitioner's patient."

"Well, Doctor," said Winterblossom, "I must wait till Sir Bingo comes in—he has a hunting-flask usually about him, which contains as good medicine as your's to the full."

"You will wait for Sir Bingo some time," said the Doctor, "he is a gentleman of sedentary habits—he has ordered another *magnum*."

"Sir Bingo is an uneo name for a man o' quality, dinna ye think sae, Dr Cocklehen?" said Mrs Blower. "John Blower, when he was a wee bit in the wind's eye, as he ca'd it, puir fallow—used to sing a sang about a dog they ca'd Bingo, that suld hae belanged to a farmer."

"Our Bingo is but a puppy yet, madam—or if a dog, he is a sad dog," said Mr Winterblossom, applauding his own wit, by one of his own inimitable smiles.

"Or a mad dog, rather," said Mr Chatterley, "for he drinks no water;" and he also smiled

gracefully at the thoughts of having trumped, as it were, the president's pun.

" Twa pleasant men, Doctor," said the widow, " and so is Sir Bungy too for that matter; but O! is nae it a pity he should bide sae lang by the bottle? It was puir John Blower's fau't too, that weary tippling; when he wan to the lee-side of a bowl of punch, there was nae raising him. —But they are taking awa' the things, and, Doctor, is it not an awfu' thing that the creature-comforts should hae been used without grace or thanksgiving?—that Mr Chitterling, if he really be a minister, has muckle to answer for, that he neglects his Master's service."

" Why, madam," said the Doctor, " Mr Chatterley is scarce arrived at the rank of a minister plenipotentiary."

" A minister potentiary—ah, Doctor, I doubt that is some jeest of your's," said the widow; " that's sae like puir John Blower. When I wad hae had him gie up the Lovely Peggy, ship and cargo, (the vessel was named after me, Doctor Kittleben,) to be remembered in the prayers o' the congregation, he wad sae to me, ' they may

pray that stand the risk, Peggy Bryce, for I've made insurance.' He was a merry man, Doctor; but he had the root of the matter in him, for a' his light way of speaking, as deep as ony skipper that ever loosed anchor from Leith Roads. I hae been a forsaken creature since his death—O the weary days and nights that I have had!—and the weight on the spirits—the spirits, Doctor!—though I canna sae I hae been easier since I hae been at the Wall than even now—if I kenned what I was awing ye for elickstir, Doctor, for it's done me muckle heart's good, forbye the opening of my mind to you?"

"Fie, fie, ma'am," said the Doctor, as the widow pulled out a seal-skin pouch, such as sailors carry tobacco in, but apparently well stuffed with bank-notes,—"Fie, fie, madam—I am no apothecary—I have my diploma from Leyden—a regular physician, madam,—the elixir is heartily at your service; and should you want any advice, no man will be prouder to assist you than your humble servant."

"I am sure I am muckle obliged to your kindness, Dr Kickalpin," said the widow, folding up

her pouch, "this was puir John Blower's *spleuchan*, as they ca' it—I e'en wear it for his sake. He was a kind man, and left me comfortable in warld's gudes; but comforts hae their cumbers, —to be a lone woman is a sair weird, Dr Kittlepin."

Dr Quackleben drew his chair a little nearer that of the widow, and entered into a closer communication with her, in a tone doubtless of more delicate consolation than was fit for the ears of the company at large.

One of the chief delights of a watering-place is, that every one's affairs seem to be put under the special surveillance of the whole company, so that, in all probability, the various flirtations, *liaisons*, and so forth, which naturally take place in the society, are not only the subject of amusement to the parties engaged, but also to the lookers on; that is to say, generally speaking, to the whole community, of which for the time the said parties are members. Lady Penelope, the presiding goddess of the region, watchful over all her circle, was not long of observing that the Doctor seemed to be suddenly engaged in close

communication with the widow, and that he had even ventured to take hold of her fair plump hand, with a manner which partook at once of the gallant suitor, and of the medical adviser.

"For the love of Heaven," said her ladyship, "who can that comely dame be, on whom our excellent and learned Doctor looks with such uncommon regard?"

"Fat, fair, and forty," said Mr Winterblossom; "that is all I know of her—a mercantile person."

"A carrack, Sir President," said the chaplain, "richly laden with colonial produce, by name the Lovely Peggy Bryce—no master—the late John Blower of North Leith having pushed off his boat for the Stygian Creek, and left the vessel without a hand on board."

"The Doctor," said Lady Penelope, turning her glass towards them, "seems willing to play the part of pilot."

"I dare say he will be willing to change her name and register," said Mr Chatterley.

"He can be no less in common requital," said Winterblossom. "She has changed his

name six times in the five minutes which I stood within hearing of them."

"What do you think of the matter, my dear Lady Binks?" said Lady Penelope.

"Madam?" said Lady Binks, starting from a reverie, and answering as one who either had not heard, or did not understand the question.

"I mean, what think you of what is going on yonder?"

Lady Binks turned her glass in the direction of Lady Penelope's glance, fixed the widow and the Doctor with one bold fashionable stare, and then dropping her hand slowly, said with indifference, "I really see nothing there worth thinking about."

"I dare say it is a fine thing to be married," said Lady Penelope; "one's thoughts, I suppose, are so much engrossed with one's own perfect happiness, that they have neither time nor inclination to laugh like other folks. Miss Rachael Bonnierigs would have laughed till her eyes run over, had she seen what Lady Binks cares so little about—I dare say it must be an all-sufficient happiness to be married."

"He would be a happy man that could convince your ladyship of that in good earnest," said Mr Winterblossom.

"Oh, who knows—the whim may strike me," replied the lady; "but no—no—no;—and that is three times."

"Say it sixteen times more," said the gallant president, "and let nineteen nay-says be a grant."

"If I should say a thousand Noes, there exists not the alchemy in living man that can extract one Yes out of the whole mass," said her ladyship. "Blessed be the memory of Queen Bess!—She set us all an example to keep power when we have it.—What noise is that?"

"Only the usual after-dinner quarrel," said the divine. "I hear the captain's voice, else most silent, commanding them to keep peace, in the devil's name and that of the ladies."

"Upon my word, dearest Lady Binks, this is too bad of that lord and master of yours, and of Mowbray, who might have more sense, and of the rest of that claret-drinking set, to be quarrelling and alarming our nerves every evening with presenting their pistols perpetually at each

other, like sportsmen confined to the house upon a rainy 12th of August. I am tired of the Peace-maker—he but skins the business up to have it break out elsewhere.—What think you, love, if we were to give out in orders, that the next quarrel which may arise, shall be *bona fide* fought to an end?—We will all go out and see it, and wear the colours on each side; and if there should a funeral come of it, we will attend it in a body. —Weeds are so becoming!—Are they not, my dear Lady Binks? Look at Widow Blower in her deep blacks—don't you envy her, my love?"

Lady Binks seemed about to make a sharp and hasty answer, but checked herself, perhaps under the recollection that she could not prudently come to an open breach with Lady Penelope.—At the same moment the door opened, and a lady dressed in a riding-habit, and wearing a black veil over her hat, appeared at the entry of the apartment.

"Angels and ministers of grace!" exclaimed Lady Penelope, with her very best tragic start—"my dearest Clara, why so late? and why thus? Will you step to my dressing-room—Jones will

get you one of my gowns—we are just of a size, you know—do, pray—let me be vain of something of my own for once by seeing you wear it."

This was spoken in the tone of the fondest female friendship, and at the same time the fair hostess bestowed on Miss Mowbray one of those tender caresses, which ladies, God bless them, sometimes bestow on each other with unnecessary prodigality, to the great discontent and envy of the male spectators.

"You are fluttered, my dearest Clara—you are feverish—I am sure you are," continued the sweetly anxious Lady Penelope; "let me persuade you to lie down."

"Indeed you are mistaken, Lady Penelope," said Miss Mowbray, who seemed to receive much as a matter of course her ladyship's profusion of affectionate politeness;—"I am heated, and my pony trotted hard, that is the whole mystery.—Let me have a cup of tea, Mrs Jones, and the matter is ended."

"Fresh tea, Jones, directly," said Lady Penelope, and led her passive friend to her own

corner, as she was pleased to call the recess, in which she held her little court—ladies and gentlemen curtseying and bowing as she passed; to which civilities the new guest made no more return, than the most ordinary politeness rendered unavoidable.

Lady Binks did not rise to receive her, but sat upright in her chair, and bent her head very stiffly; a courtesy which Miss Mowbray returned in the same stately manner, without farther greeting on either side.

"Now, wha can that be, Doctor?" said the Widow Blower—"mind ye have promised to tell me all about the grand folk—wha can that be that Lady Penelope hauds such a racket wi'?—and what for does she come wi' a habit and a beaver-hat, when we are a' (a glance at her own gown) in our silks and satins?"

"To tell you who she is, my dear Mrs Blower, is very easy," said the officious Doctor. "She is Miss Clara Mowbray, sister to the Lord of the Manor—the gentleman who wears the green coat, with an arrow on the cape. To tell why she wears that habit, or does anything else, would be ra-

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ther beyond doctor's skill. Truth is, I have always thought she was a little—a very little—touched—call it nerves—hypochondria—or what you will."

"Lord help us, puir thing!" said the compassionate widow.—"And troth it looks like it. But it's a shame to let her go loose, Doctor—she might hurt hersell, or somebody. See, she has ta'en the knife!—O, it's only to cut a shave of the diet-loaf. She winna let the powder-monkey of a boy help her. There's judgment in that though, Doctor, for she can cut thick or thin as she likes.—Dear me! she has not taken mair than a crumb, that ane would pit between the wires of a canary-bird's cage, after all.—I wish she would lift up that lang veil, or put aff that riding-skirt, Doctor. She should really be shewed the regulations, Doctor Kickelshin."

"She cares about no rules we can make, Mrs Blower," said the Doctor; "and her brother's will and pleasure, and Lady Penelope's whim of indulging her, carry her through in every thing. They should take advice on her case."

"Ay, truly, it's time to take advice, when

young creatures like her caper in amang dressed leddies, just as if they were come from scampering on Leith sands.—Such a wark as my leddy makes wi' her, Doctor! Ye would think they were baith fools of a feather."

"They might have flown on one wing, for what I know," said Dr Quackleben; "but there was early and sound advice taken in Lady Penelope's case. My friend, the late Earl of Featherhead, was a man of judgment—did little in his family but by rule of medicine—so that, what with the waters, and what with my own care, Lady Penelope is only freakish—fanciful—that's all—and her quality bears it out—the peccant principle might have broken out under other treatment."

"Ay—she has been weel-friended," said the widow; "but this bairn Mowbray, puir thing! how came she to be sae left to hersell?"

"Her mother was dead—her father thought of nothing but his sports," said the Doctor. "Her brother was educated in England, and cared for nobody but himself, if he had been here. What education she got was at her own hand—what

reading she read was in a library full of old romances—what friends or company she had was what chance sent her—then no family-physician, not even a good surgeon within ten miles! And so you cannot wonder if the poor thing became unsettled."

"Puir thing!—no doctor!—nor even a surgeon!—But, Doctor," said the widow, "maybe the puir thing had the enjoyment of her health ye ken, and then——"

"Ah? ha, ha!—why *then*, madam, she needed a physician far more than if she had been delicate. A skilful physician, Mrs Blower, knows how to bring down that robust health, which is a very alarming state of the frame when it is considered *secundum artem*. Most sudden deaths happen when people are in a robust state of health. Ah! that state of perfect health is what the doctor dreads most on behalf of his patient."

"Ay, ay, Doctor?—I am quite sensible, nae doubt," said the widow, "of the great advantage of having a skeelfu' person about ane."

Here the Doctor's voice, in his earnestness to convince Mrs Blower of the danger of supposing

herself capable of living and breathing without a medical man's permission, sunk into a soft pleading tone, of which our reporter could not catch the sound. He was, as great orators will sometimes be, "inaudible in the gallery."

Meanwhile, Lady Penelope overwhelmed Clara Mowbray with her caresses. In what degree her ladyship, at her heart, loved this young person, might be difficult to ascertain,—probably in the degree in which a child loves a favourite toy. But Clara was a toy not always to be come by—as whimsical in her way as her ladyship in her own, only that poor Clara's singularities were real, and her ladyship's chiefly affected. Without adopting the harshness of the Doctor's conclusions concerning the former, she was certainly unequal in her spirits; and her occasional fits of levity were chequered by very long intervals of sadness. Her levity also appeared, in the world's eye, greater than it really was, for she had never been under the restraint of society which was really good, and entertained an undue contempt for that which she sometimes mingled with; having unhappily none to teach her the important

truth, that some forms and restraints are to be observed, less in respect to others than to ourselves. Her dress, her manners, and her ideas, were therefore very much her own; and though they became her wonderfully, yet, like Ophelia's garlands, and wild snatches of melody, they were calculated to excite compassion and melancholy, even while they amused the observer.

"And why came you not to dinner?—We expected you—your throne was prepared."

"I had scarce come to tea," said Miss Mowbray, "of my own free will. But my brother says your ladyship proposes to come to Shaws-Castle, and he insisted it was quite right and necessary, to confirm you in so flattering a purpose, that I should come and say, Pray do, Lady Penelope; and so now here am I to say, Pray, do come."

"Is an invitation so flattering limited to me alone, my dear Clara?—Lady Binks will be jealous."

"Bring Lady Binks, if she has the condescension to honour us—[a bow was very stiffly exchanged between the ladies]—bring Mr Springblossom—

Winterblossom—and all the lions and lionesses —we have room for the whole collection. My brother, I suppose, will bring his own particular regiment of bears, which, with the usual assortment of monkeys seen in all caravans, will complete the menagerie. How you are to be entertained at Shaws Castle, is, I thank Heaven, not my business, but John's."

"We shall want no formal entertainment, my love," said Lady Penelope; "*a dejeuner à la fourchette*—we know, Clara, you would die of doing the honours of a formal dinner."

"Not a bit; I should live long enough to make my will, and bequeath all large parties to Old Nick, who invented them."

"Miss Mowbray," said Lady Binks, who had been thwarted by this free-spoken young lady, both in her former character of a coquette and romp, and in that of a prude, which she at present wore—"Miss Mowbray declares for

'Champagne and a chicken at last.'"

"The chicken, without the champagne, if you please," said Miss Mowbray; "I have known

ladies pay dear to have champagne on the board. —By the by, Lady Penelope, you have not your collection in the same order and discipline as Pidcock and Polito.—There was much growling and snarling in the lower den when I passed it."

"It was feeding-time, my love," said Lady Penelope; "and the lower animals of every class become pugnacious at that hour—you see all our safer and well-conditioned animals are loose, and in good order."

"Oh, yes—in the keeper's presence, you know —Well, I must venture to cross the hall again among all that growling and grumbling—I would I had the fairy prince's quarters of mutton to toss among them if they should break out—He, I mean, who fetched water from the Fountain of Lions. However, on second thoughts, I will take the back way, and avoid them.—What says honest Bottom?—

> "For if they should as lions come in strife
> Into such place, 'twere pity of their life."

"Shall I go with you, my dear?" said Lady Penelope.

"No—I have too great a soul for that—I

think some of them are lions only as far as the hide is concerned."

"But why would you go so soon, Clara?"

"Because my errand is finished—have I not invited you and yours? and would not Lord Chesterfield himself allow I have done the polite thing?"

"But you have spoke to none of the company—how can you be so odd, my love?" said her ladyship.

"Why, I spoke to them all when I spoke to you and Lady Binks—but I am a good girl, and will do as I am bid."

So saying, she looked round the company, and addressed each of them with an affectation of interest and politeness.

"Mr Winterblossom, I hope the gout is better—Mr Robert Rymar—(I have escaped calling him Thomas for once)—I hope the public give encouragement to the muses—Mr Keelavine, I trust your pencil is busy—Mr Chatterley, I have no doubt your flock improves—Dr Quackleben, I trust your patients recover.—These are all the especials of the worthy company I know—for

the rest, health to the sick, and pleasure to the healthy."

"You are not going in reality, my love?" said Lady Penelope; "these hasty rides agitate your nerves—they do, indeed—you should be cautious—Shall I speak to Quackleben?"

"To neither quack nor quackle, on my account, my dear lady.—It is not as you would seem to say, by your winking at Lady Binks—it is not, indeed—I shall be no Lady Clementina, to be the wonder and pity of the spring of St Ronan's—No Ophelia neither—though I will say with her, Good night, ladies—Good night, sweet ladies!—and now—not my coach, my coach—but my horse, my horse!"

So saying, she tripped out of the room by a side passage, leaving the ladies looking at each other significantly, and shaking their heads with looks of much import.

"Something has ruffled the poor unhappy girl," said Lady Penelope; "I never saw her so very odd before."

"Were I to speak my mind," said Lady Binks, "I think, as Mrs Highmore says in the

farce, her madness is but a poor excuse for her impertinence."

"Oh fie! my sweet Lady Binks," said Lady Penelope, "spare my poor favourite! You, surely, of all others, should forgive the excesses of an amiable eccentricity of temper.—Forgive me, my love, but I must defend an absent friend—My Lady Binks, I am very sure, is too generous and candid to

'Hate for arts which caused herself to rise.'"

"Not being conscious of any high elevation, my lady," answered Lady Binks, "I do not know any arts I have been under the necessity of practising to attain it. I suppose a Scots lady of ancient family may become the wife of an English baronet, and no very extraordinary great cause to wonder at it."

"No, surely—but people in this world will, you know, wonder at nothing," answered Lady Penelope.

"If you envy me my poor quiz Sir Bingo, I'll get you a better, Lady Pen."

"I don't doubt your talents, my dear, but

'when I want one, I will get one for myself.—But here comes the whole party of quizzes.—Joliffe, offer the gentlemen tea—then get the floor ready for the dancers, and set the card-tables in the next room."

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER DINNER.

They draw the cork, they broach the barrel,
And first they kiss, and then they quarrel.
Prior.

If the reader has attended much to the manners of the canine race, he may have remarked the very different manner in which the individuals of the different genders carry on their quarrels among each other. The females are testy, petulant, and very apt to indulge their impatient dislike of each other's presence, or the spirit of rivalry which it produces, in a sudden bark and snap, which last is generally made as much at advantage as possible. But these ebullitions of pee-

vishness lead to no very serious or prosecuted conflict; the affair begins and ends in a moment. Not so the ire of the male dogs, which, once produced, and excited by growls of mutual offence and defiance, leads generally to a fierce and obstinate contest; in which if the parties be dogs of game, and well matched, they grapple, throttle, tear, roll each other in the kennel, and can only be separated by choking them with their own collars, till they lose wind and hold at the same time, or by surprising them out of their wrath by sousing them with cold water.

The simile, though a currish one, will hold good in its application to the human race. While the ladies in the tea-room of the Fox Hotel were engaged in the light snappish velitation or skirmish, which we have described, the gentlemen who remained in the parlour were more than once like to have quarrelled more seriously.

We have mentioned the weighty reasons which induced Mr Mowbray to look upon the stranger whom a general invitation had brought into their society, with unfavourable prepossessions; and

these were far from being abated by the demeanour of Tyrrel, which, though perfectly well-bred, indicated a sense of equality, which the young Laird of St Ronan's considered as extremely presumptuous.

As for Sir Bingo, he already began to nourish the genuine hatred always entertained by a mean spirit against an antagonist, before whom it is conscious of having made a dishonourable retreat. He forgot not the manner, look, and tone, with which Tyrrel had checked his unauthorized intrusion; and though he had sunk beneath it at the moment, the recollection rankled in his heart as an affront to be avenged. As he drank his wine, courage, the want of which was, in his more sober moments, a check upon his bad temper, began to inflame his malignity, and he ventured upon several occasions to shew his spleen, by contradicting Tyrrel more flatly than good manners permitted upon so short an acquaintance, and without any provocation. Tyrrel saw his ill humour and despised it, as that of an overgrown school-boy, whom it was not worth his while to answer according to his folly.

One of the apparent causes of the Baronet's rudeness was indeed childish enough. The company were talking of shooting, the most animating topic of conversation among Scottish country gentlemen of the younger class, and Tyrrel had mentioned something of a favourite setter, an uncommonly handsome dog, from which he had been for some time separated, but which he expected would rejoin him in the course of next week.

"A setter!" retorted Sir Bingo, with a sneer; "a pointer I suppose you mean."

"No, sir," said Tyrrel; "I am perfectly aware of the difference betwixt a setter and a pointer, and I know the old-fashioned setter is become unfashionable among modern sportsmen. But I love my dog as a companion, as well as for his merits in the field; and a setter is more sagacious, more attached, and fitter for his place on the hearth-rug, than a pointer—not," he added, "from any deficiency of intellects on the pointer's part, but he is generally so abused while in the management of brutal breakers and grooms, that he loses all excepting his profes-

sional accomplishments, of finding and standing steady to game."

"And who the d—l desires he should have more?" said Sir Bingo.

"Many people, Sir Bingo," replied Tyrrel, "have been of opinion, that both dogs and men may follow sport indifferently well, though they do happen, at the same time, to be fit for mixing in friendly intercourse in society."

"That is for licking trenchers, and scratching copper, I suppose," said the Baronet *sotto voce*; and added, in a louder and more distinct tone,—"He never before heard that a setter was fit to follow any man's heels but a poacher's."

"You know it now then, Sir Bingo," answered Tyrrel; "and I hope you will not fall into so great a mistake again."

The Peace-maker here seemed to think his interference necessary, and, surmounting his taciturnity, made the following pithy speech:—"By Cot! and do you see, as you are looking for my opinion, I think there is no dispute in the matter—because, by Cot! it occurs to me, d'ye see,

that you are both right, by Cot! It may do fery well for my excellent friend Sir Bingo, who hath stables, and kennels, and what not, to maintain the six filthy prutes that are yelping and yowling all the tay, and all the neight too, under my window, by Cot!—And if they are yelping and yowling there, may I never die but I wish they were yelping and yowling somewhere else. But then there is many a man who may be as cood a gentleman at the bottom as my worthy friend Sir Bingo, though it may be that he is poor—and if he is poor—and as if it might be my own case, or that of this honest gentleman, Mr Tirl, is that a reason or a law, that he is not to keep a prute of a tog, to help him to take his sports and his pleasures? and if he has not a stable or a kennel to put the crature into, must he not keep it in his pit of ped-room, or upon his parlour, seeing that Luckie Dods would make the kitchen too hot for the paist—and so, if Mr Tirl finds a setter more fitter for his purpose than a pointer, by Cot, I know no law against it, else may I never die the black death."

If this oration appear rather long for the occasion, the reader must recollect that Captain MacTurk had in all probability the trouble of translating it from the periphrastic language of Ossian, in which it was originally conceived in his own mind.

The Man of Law replied to the Man of Peace, "Ye are mistaken for ance in your life, Captain, for there is a law against setters; and I will undertake to prove them to be the 'lying dogs' which are mentioned in the auld Scots statute, and which all and sundry are discharged to keep, under a penalty of——"

Here the Captain broke in with a very solemn mien and dignified manner—"By Cot, Master Micklewhame, and I shall be asking what you mean by talking to me of peing mistaken, and about lying togs, sir—pecause I would have you to know, and to pelieve, and to very well consisider, that I never was mistaken in my life, sir, unless it was when I took you for a gentleman."

"No offence, Captain," said Mr Micklewham; "dinna break the wand of peace, man, you that

should be the first to keep it.—He is as cankered," continued the Man of Law, apart to his patron, "as an auld Hieland terrier, that snaps at whatever comes near it—but I tell you ae thing, St Ronan's, and that is on soul and conscience, that I believe this is the very lad Tirl, that I raised a summons against before the justices—him and another hempie—in your father's time, for shooting on the Springwellhead muirs."

"The devil you did, Mick!" replied the Lord of the Manor, also aside;—"Well, I am obliged to you for giving me some reason for the ill thoughts I had of him—I knew he was some trumpery scamp.—I'll blow him, by ——"

"Whisht—stop—hush—haud your tongue, St Ronan's—keep a calm sough—ye see, I intented the process, by your worthy father's desire, before the Quarter Sessions—but I ken na —The auld sheriff clerk stood the lad's friend—and some of the justices thought it was but a mistake of the marches, and sae we couldna get a judgment—and your father was very ill of the gout, and I was feared to vex him, and so I was fain to let the process sleep, for fear they had

been assoilzied.—Sae ye had better gang cautious to wark, St Ronan's, for though they were summoned, they were not convict."

"Could you not take up the action again?" said Mr Mowbray.

"Whew! its been prescribed sax or seven years syne. It is a great shame, St Ronan's, that the game laws, whilk are the very best protection that is left to country gentlemen against the encroachment of their inferiors, rin sae short a course of prescription—a poacher may just jink ye back and forward like a flea in a blanket, (wi' pardon)—hap ye out of ae county and into anither at their pleasure, like pyots—and unless ye get your thumb-nail on them in the very nick o' time, ye may dine on a dish of prescription, and sup upon an absolvitor."

"It is a shame, indeed," said Mowbray, turning from his confidant and agent, and addressing himself to the company in general, yet not without a peculiar look directed to Tyrrel.

"What is a shame, sir?" said Tyrrel, conceiving that the observation was particularly addressed to him.

"That we should have so many poachers upon our muirs, sir," answered St Ronan's. "I sometimes regret having countenanced the Well here, when I think how many guns it has brought on my property every season."

"Hout, fie! hout away, St Ronan's!" said his Man of Law; "no countenance the Waal? What would the country-side be without it, I would be glad to ken? It's the greatest improvement that has been made on this country since the year forty-five. Na, na, it's no the Waal that's to blame for the poaching and delinquencies on the game.—We maun to the Aul' Town for the howf of that kind of cattle. Our rules at the Waal are clear, and express against trespassers."

"I can't think," said the Squire, "what made my father sell the property of the old change-house yonder, to the hag that keeps it open out of spite, I think, and to harbour poachers and vagabonds?—I cannot conceive what made him do so foolish a thing!"

"Probably because your father wanted money, sir," said Tyrrel drily; "and my worthy

landlady, Mrs Dods, had got some.—You know, I presume, sir, that I lodge there."

"Oh, sir," replied Mowbray, in a tone betwixt scorn and civility, "you cannot suppose the present company is alluded to; I only presumed to mention as a fact, that we have been annoyed with unqualified people shooting on our grounds, without either liberty or licence.—And I hope to have her sign taken down for it—that is all—There was the same plague in my father's days I think, Mick?"

But Mr Micklewham, who did not like Tyrrel's looks so well as to induce him to become approver on the occasion, replied with an inarticulate grunt, addressed to the company, and a private admonition to his patron's own ear, "to let sleeping dogs lie."

"I can scarce forbear the fellow," said St Ronan's; "and yet I cannot well tell where my dislike to him lies—but it would be d——d folly to turn out with him for nothing; and so, honest Mick, I will be as quiet as I can."

"And that you may be so," said Mickle-

wham, "I think you had best take no more wine."

"I think so too," said the Squire; "for each glass I drink in his company gives me the heart-burn—yet the man is not different from other raffs either—but there is a something about him intolerable to me."

So saying, he pushed back his chair from the table, and—*regis ad exemplar*—after the pattern of the Laird, all the company arose.

Sir Bingo got up with reluctance, which he testified by two or three deep growls, as he followed the rest of the company into the outer apartment, which served as an entrance-hall, and divided the dining-parlour from the tea-room, as it was called. Here, while the party were assuming their hats, for the purpose of joining the ladies' society, (which old-fashioned folks used only to take up for that of going into the open air,) Tyrrel asked a smart footman, who stood betwixt him and that part of his property, to hand him the hat which lay on the table beyond.

"Call your own servant, sir," answered the fellow, with the true insolence of a pampered menial.

"Your master," answered Tyrrel, "ought to have taught you good manners, my friend, before bringing you here."

"Sir Bingo Binks is my master," said the fellow, in the same insolent tone as formerly.

"Now for it, Bingie," said Mowbray, who was aware that the Baronet's pot-courage had arrived at fighting-pitch.

"Yes!" said Sir Bingo aloud, and more articulately than usual—"The fellow is my servant —what has any one to say to it?"

"I at least have my mouth stopped," answered Tyrrel, with perfect composure. "I should have been surprised to have found Sir Bingo's servant better bred than himself."

"What d'ye mean by that, sir?" said Sir Bingo, coming up in an offensive attitude, for he was no mean pupil of the Fives-Court—"What d'ye mean by that? D—n you, sir! I'll serve you out before you can say dumpling."

"And I, Sir Bingo, unless you presently lay aside that look and manner, will knock you down before you can cry help."

The visitor held in his hand a slip of oak, with which he gave a flourish, that, however slight, intimated some acquaintance with the noble art of single-stick. From this demonstration Sir Bingo thought it prudent somewhat to recoil, though backed by a party of friends, who, in their zeal for his honour, would rather have seen his bones broken in conflict bold, than his honour injured by a discreditable retreat; and Tyrrel seemed to have some inclination to indulge them. But, at the very instant when his hand was raised with a motion of no doubtful import, a whispering voice, close to his ear, pronounced the emphatic words—"Are you a man?"

Not the thrilling tone with which our inimitable Siddons used to electrify the scene, when she uttered the same whisper, ever had a more powerful effect upon an auditor, than had these unexpected sounds on him, to whom they were now addressed. Tyrrel forgot every thing—his

quarrel—the circumstances in which he was placed—the company. The crowd was to him at once annihilated, and life seemed to have no other object than to follow the person who had spoken. But suddenly as he turned, the disappearance of the monitor was at least equally so, for, amid the group of common-place countenances by which he was surrounded, there was none which assorted to the tone and words, which possessed such a power over him. "Make way," he said, to those who surrounded him; and it was in the tone of one who was prepared, if necessary, to make way for himself.

Mr Mowbray, of St Ronan's, stepped forward. "Come, sir," said he, "this will not do—you have come here, a stranger among us, to assume airs and dignities, which, by G—d, would become a duke or a prince! We must know who or what you are, before we permit you to carry your high tone any farther."

This address seemed at once to arrest Tyrrel's anger, and his impatience to leave the company. He turned to Mowbray, collected his thoughts

for an instant, and then answered him thus:—"Mr Mowbray, I seek no quarrel with any one here—with you, in particular, I am most unwilling to have any disagreement. I came here by invitation, not certainly expecting much pleasure, but, at the same time, supposing myself secure from incivility. In the last point, I find myself mistaken, and therefore wish the company good night. I must also make my adieu to the ladies."

So saying, he walked several steps, yet, as it seemed, rather irresolutely, towards the door of the card-room—and then, to the increased surprise of the company, stopped suddenly, and muttering something about the "unfitness of the time," turned on his heel, and bowing haughtily, as there was way made for him, walked in the opposite direction towards the door which led to the outer hall.

"D—n me, Sir Bingo, will you let him off?" said Mowbray, who seemed to delight in pushing his friend into new scrapes—"To him, man—to him—he shews the white feather."

Sir Bingo, thus encouraged, planted himself

with a look of defiance, exactly between Tyrrel and the door; upon which the retreating guest, bestowing on him most emphatically the epithet Fool, seized him by the collar, and flung him out of his way with some violence.

"I am to be found at the Old Town of St Ronan's by whomsoever has any concern with me."—Without waiting the issue of this aggression farther than to utter these words, Tyrrel left the hotel. He stopped in the court-yard, however, with the air of one uncertain whither he intended to go, and who was desirous to ask some question, which seemed to die upon his tongue. At length his eye fell upon a groom, who stood not far from the door of the inn, holding in his hand a handsome pony, with a side-saddle.

"Whose——" said Tyrrel—but the rest of the question he seemed unable to utter.

The man, however, replied, as if he had heard the whole interrogation.—"Miss Mowbray's, sir, of St Ronan's—she leaves directly—and so I am walking the pony—a clever thing, sir, for a lady."

"She returns to Shaws-Castle by the Buck-lane road?"

"I suppose so, sir," said the groom. "It is the nighest, and Miss Clara cares little for rough roads. Zounds! She can spank it over wet and dry."

Tyrrel turned away from the man, and hastily left the hotel—not, however, by the road which led to the Auldton, but by a foot-path among the natural copse-wood, which, following the course of the brook, intersected the usual horse-road to Shaws-Castle, the seat of Mr Mowbray, at a romantic spot called the Buckstane.

In a small peninsula, formed by a winding of the brook, was situated, on a rising hillock, a large rough-hewn pillar of stone, said by tradition to commemorate the fall of a stag of unusual speed, size, and strength, whose flight, after having lasted through a whole summer's day, had there terminated in death, to the honour and glory of some ancient Baron of St Ronan's, and of his staunch hounds. During the periodical cuttings of the copse, which the neces-

sities of the family of St Ronan's brought round more frequently than Ponty would have recommended, some oaks had been spared in the neighbourhood of this massive obelisk, old enough perhaps to have heard the whoop and halloo, which followed the fall of the stag, and to have witnessed the raising of the rude monument, by which that great event was commemorated. These trees, with their broad spreading boughs, made a twilight even of noon-day; and, now that the sun was approaching its setting point, their shade already anticipated night. This was especially the case where three or four of them stretched their arms over a deep gully, through which winded the horse-path to Shaws-Castle, at a point about a pistol-shot distant from the Buck-stane. As the principal access to Mr Mowbray's mansion was by a carriage-way, which passed in a different direction, the present path was left almost in a state of nature, full of large stones, and broken by gullies, delightful, from the varied character of its banks, to the picturesque traveller, and most inconvenient, nay dangerous, to him who had a stumbling horse.

The foot-path to the Buckstane, which here joined the bridle-road, had been constructed, at the expence of a subscription, under the direction of Mr Winterblossom, who had taste enough to see the beauties of this secluded spot, which was exactly such as in earlier times might have harboured the ambush of some marauding chief. This recollection had not escaped Tyrrel, to whom the whole scenery was familiar, who now hastened to the spot, as one which peculiarly suited his present purpose. He sat down by one of the larger projecting trees, and, screened by its enormous branches from observation, was enabled to watch the road from the Hotel for a considerable part of its extent, while he was himself invisible to any who might travel upon it.

Meanwhile his sudden departure excited a considerable sensation among the party whom he had just left, and who were induced to form conclusions not very favourable to his character. Sir Bingo, in particular, blustered loudly and more loudly, in proportion to the increasing distance betwixt himself and his antagonist, declaring his resolution to be revenged on the scoun-

drel for his insolence—to drive him from the neighbourhood,—and I know not what other menaces of formidable import. The devil, in the old stories of *diablerie*, was always sure to start up at the elbow of any one who nursed diabolical purposes, and only wanted a little backing from the foul fiend to carry his imaginations into action. The noble Captain MacTurk had so far this property of his infernal majesty, that the least hint of an approaching quarrel drew him always to the vicinity of the party concerned. He was now at Sir Bingo's side, and was taking his own view of the matter, in his character of peace-maker.

"By Cot! and it's very exceedingly true, my goot friend, Sir Binco—and as you say, it concerns your honour, and the honour of the place, and credit and character of the whole company, by Cot! that this matter be properly looked after; for, as I think, he laid hands on your body, my excellent good friend."

"Hands, Captain MacTurk!" exclaimed Sir Bingo, in some confusion; "no, blast him—not

so bad as that neither—if he had, I should have handed *him* over the window—but, by ——, the fellow had the impudence to offer to collar me—I had just stepped back to square at him, when, curse me, the blackguard ran away."

"Right, vara right, Sir Bingo," said the Man at Law, "a vara perfect blackguard, a poaching sorning sort of fallow, that I will have scoured out of the country before he be three days aulder. Fash you your beard nae further about the matter, Sir Bingo."

"By Cot, but I can tell you, Mr Meikelwham," said the Man of Peace, with great solemnity of visage, "that you are scalding your lips in other folks' kale, and that it is necessary for the credit, and honour, and respect of this company, at the Well of St Ronan's, that Sir Bingo goes by more competent advice than your's upon the present occasion, Mr Meiklewham; for though your counsel may do very well in a small debt-court, here, do you see, Mr Meiklewham, is a question of honour, which is not a thing in your line, as I take it."

"No, before George! is it not," answered Micklewhame; "e'en take it all to yoursell, Captain, and meikle ye are likely to make on't."

"Then," said the Captain, "Sir Binco, I will beg the favour of your company to the smoking room, where we may have a segar and a glass of gin-twist; and we will consider how the honour of the company must be supported and upholden upon the present conjuncture."

The Baronet complied with this invitation, as much, perhaps, in consequence of the medium through which the Captain intended to convey his warlike counsels, as for the pleasure with which he anticipated the result of these counsels themselves. He followed the military step of his leader, whose stride was more stiff, and his form more perpendicular, when exalted by the consciousness of an approaching quarrel, to the smoking-room, where, sighing as he lighted his segar, Sir Bingo prepared to listen to the words of wisdom and valour, as they should flow in mingled stream from the lips of Captain MacTurk.

Meanwhile the rest of the company joined the ladies. "Here has been Clara," said Lady Penelope to Mr Mowbray; "here has been Miss Mowbray among us, like the ray of a sun which does but dazzle and die."

"Ah, poor Clara," said Mowbray; "I thought I saw her thread her way through the crowd a little while since, but I was not sure."

"Well," said Lady Penelope, "she has asked us all up to Shaws-Castle on Thursday, to a *dejeuner à la fourchette*—I trust you confirm your sister's invitation, Mr Mowbray?"

"Certainly, Lady Penelope," replied Mowbray; "and I am truly glad Clara has had the grace to think of it—How we shall acquit ourselves is a different question, for neither she nor I are much accustomed to play host or hostess."

"Oh! it will be delightful, I am sure," said Lady Penelope; "Clara has a grace in every thing she does; and you, Mr Mowbray, can be a perfectly well-bred gentleman—when you please."

"That qualification is severe—Well—good

manners be my speed—I will certainly please to do my best, when I see your ladyship at Shaws-Castle, which has seen no company this many a day.—Clara and I have lived a wild life of it, each in their own way."

"Indeed, Mr Mowbray," said Lady Binks, "if I might presume to speak—I think you do suffer your sister to ride about a little too much without an attendant. I know Miss Mowbray rides as woman never rode before, but still an accident may happen."

"An accident?" replied Mowbray—"Ah, Lady Binks, accidents happen as frequently when ladies *have* attendants as when they want them."

Lady Binks, who, in her maiden state, had cantered a good deal about these woods under Sir Bingo's escort, coloured, looked spiteful, and was silent.

"Besides," said John Mowbray, more lightly, "where is the risk after all? There are no wolves in our woods to eat up our pretty Red-Riding Hoods; and no lions either—except those of Lady Penelope's train."

"Who draw the car of Cybele," said Mr Chatterley.

Lady Penelope luckily did not understand the allusion, which was indeed better intended than imagined.

"Apropos!" she said; "what have you done with the great lion of the day? I see Mr Tyrrel nowhere—Is he finishing an additional bottle with Sir Bingo?"

"Mr Tyrrel, madam," said Mowbray, "has acted successively the lion rampant, and the lion passant; he has been quarrelsome, and he has run away—fled from the ire of your doughty knight, Lady Binks."

"I am sure I hope not," said Lady Binks; "my Chevalier's unsuccessful campaigns have been unable to overcome his taste for quarrels—a victory would make a fighting-man of him for life."

"That might bring its own consolations," said Winterblossom, apart to Mowbray; "quarrellers do not usually live long."

"No, no," replied Mowbray, "the lady's de-

spair which broke out just now, even in her own despite, is quite natural—absolutely legitimate. Sir Bingo will give her no chance that way."

Mowbray then made his bow to Lady Penelope, and in answer to her request that he would join the ball or card-table, observed, that he had no time to lose; that the heads of the old domestics at Shaws-Castle would be by this time absolutely turned, by the apprehensions of what Thursday was to bring forth; and that as Clara would certainly give no directions for the necessary arrangements, it was necessary that he should take that trouble himself.

"If you ride smartly," said Lady Penelope, "you may save even a temporary alarm, by overtaking Clara, dear creature, ere she gets home—She sometimes suffers her pony to go at will along the lane, as slow as Betty Foy's."

"Ah, but then," said little Miss Digges, "Miss Mowbray sometimes gallops as if the lark was a snail to her pony—and it quite frights one to see her."

The Doctor touched Mrs Blower, who had

approached so as to be on the verge of the genteel circle, though she did not venture within it, —they exchanged sagacious looks, and a most pitiful shake of the head. Mowbray's eye happened at that moment to glance on them; and doubtless, notwithstanding their hasting to compose their countenances to a different expression, he comprehended what was passing through their minds;—and perhaps it awoke a corresponding note in his own. He took his hat, and with a cast of thought upon his countenance which it seldom wore, left the apartment. A moment afterwards his horse's feet were heard spurning the pavement, as he started off at a sharp pace.

"There is something singular about these Mowbrays to-night," said Lady Penelope.—"Clara, poor dear angel, is always particular; but I should have thought Mowbray had too much worldly wisdom to be fanciful.—What are you consulting your *souvenir* for with such attention, my dear Lady Binks?"

"Only for the age of the moon," said her ladyship, putting the little tortoise-shell bound ca-

lendar into her reticule; and having done so, she proceeded to assist Lady Penelope in the arrangements for the evening.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MEETING.

We meet as shadows in the land of dreams,
Which speak not but in signs —

Anonymous.

Behind one of the old oaks which we have described in the preceding chapter, shrouding himself from observation like a hunter watching for his game, or an Indian for his enemy, but with different, very different purpose, Tyrrel lay on his breast near the Buck-stane, his eye on the horse-road which winded down the valley, and his ear alertly awake to every sound which mingled with the passing breeze, or with the ripple of the brook.

"To have met her in yonder congregated as-

sembly of brutes and fools"—such was a part of his internal reflections,—" had been little less than an act of madness—madness almost equal in its degree to that cowardice which has hitherto prevented my approaching her, when our eventful meeting might have taken place unobserved.—But now—now—my resolution is as fixed as the place is itself favourable. I will not wait till some chance again shall throw us together, with an hundred malignant eyes to watch, and wonder, and stare, and try in vain to account for the expression of feelings which I might find it impossible to suppress.—Hark—hark!—I hear the tread of a horse—No—it was the changeful sound of the water rushing over the pebbles. Surely she cannot have taken the other road to Shaws-Castle!—No—the sounds become distinct—her figure is visible on the path, coming swiftly forward.—Have I the courage to shew myself?—I have—the hour is come, and what must be shall be."

Yet this resolution was scarce formed ere it began to fluctuate, when he reflected upon the

fittest manner of carrying it into execution. To shew himself at a distance, might give the lady an opportunity of turning back and avoiding the interview which he had determined upon—to hide himself till the moment when her horse, in rapid motion, should pass his lurking-place, might be attended with danger to the rider—and while he hesitated which course to pursue, there was some chance of his missing the opportunity of presenting himself to Miss Mowbray at all. He himself was sensible of this, formed a hasty and desperate resolution not to suffer the present moment to escape, and, just as the ascent induced the pony to slacken its pace, Tyrrel stood in the middle of the defile, about six yards distant from the young lady.

She pulled up the reins, and stopped as if arrested by a thunderbolt.—"Clara!"—"Tyrrel!" These were the only words which were exchanged between them, until Tyrrel, moving his feet as slowly as if they had been of lead, began gradually to diminish the distance which lay betwixt them. It was then that, observing his closer ap-

proach, Miss Mowbray called out with great eagerness,—" No nearer—no nearer !—So long have I endured your presence, but if you approach me more closely, I shall be mad indeed."

" What do you fear ?" said Tyrrel, in a hollow voice—" What can you fear ?" and he continued to draw nearer, until they were within a pace of each-other.

Clara, meanwhile, dropping her bridle, clasped her hands together, and held them up towards Heaven, muttering, in a voice scarce audible, " Great God !—if this apparition be formed by my heated fancy, let it pass away ; if it be real, enable me to bear its presence !—Tell me, I conjure you, are you Francis Tyrrel in blood and body, or is this but one of those wandering visions, that have crossed my path and glared on me, but without daring to abide my steadfast glance ?"

" I am Francis Tyrrel," answered he, " in blood and body, as much as she to whom I speak is Clara Mowbray."

" Then God have mercy on us both !" said Clara, in a tone of deep feeling.

"Amen!" said Tyrrel. "But what avails this excess of agitation?—You saw me but now, Miss Mowbray—your voice still rings in my ears—You saw me but now—you spoke to me—and that when I was among strangers—Why not preserve your composure, when we are where no human eye can see—no human ear can hear?"

"Is it so?" said Clara; "and was it indeed yourself whom I saw even now?—I thought so, and something I said at the time—but my brain has been but ill-settled since we last met—But I am well now—quite well—I have invited all the people yonder to come up to Shaws-Castle—my brother desired me to do it—I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing Mr Tyrrel there—though I think there is some old grudge between my brother and you."

"Alas! Clara, you mistake. Your brother I have scarce seen," replied Tyrrel, much distressed, and apparently uncertain in what tone to address her, which might sooth, and not irritate her mental malady, of which he could now entertain no doubt.

"True—true," she said, after a moment's reflection, "my brother was then at college. It was my father, my poor father, whom you had some quarrel with.—But you will come to Shaws-Castle on Thursday, at two o'clock?—John will be glad to see you—he can be kind when he pleases—and then we will talk of old times—I must get on to have things ready—Good evening."

She would have passed him, but he took gently hold of the rein of her bridle.—"I will walk with you, Clara," he said; "the road is rough and dangerous—you ought not to ride fast.—I will walk along with you, and we will talk of former times now, more conveniently than in company."

"True—true—very true, Mr Tyrrel—it shall be as you say. My brother obliges me sometimes to go into company at that hateful place down yonder; and I do so because he likes it, and because the folks let me have my own way, and come and go as I list. Do you know, Tyrrel, that very often when I am there, and John has his

eye on me, I can carry it on as gaily as if you and I had never met?"

"I would to God we never had," said Tyrrel, in a trembling voice, "since this is to be the end of all!"

"And wherefore should not sorrow be the end of sin and of folly? And when did happiness come of disobedience?—And when did sound sleep visit a bloody pillow? That is what I say to myself, Tyrrel, and that is what you must learn to say too, and then you will bear your burthen as cheerfully as I endure mine. If we have no more than our deserts, why should we complain? —You are shedding tears, I think—Is not that childish?—They say it is a relief—if so, weep on, and I will look another way."

Tyrrel walked on by the pony's side, in vain endeavouring to compose himself so as to reply.

"Poor Tyrrel," said Clara, after she had remained silent for some time—"Poor Frank Tyrrel!—Perhaps you will say in your turn, Poor Clara—but I am not so poor in spirit as you—the blast may bend, but it shall never break me."

There was another long pause, for Tyrrel was unable to determine with himself in what strain he could address the unfortunate young lady, without awakening recollections equally painful to her feelings, and dangerous, when her precarious state of health was considered. At length she herself proceeded :—

"What needs all this, Tyrrel?—and indeed, why came you here?—Why did I find you but now brawling and quarrelling among the loudest of the brawlers and quarrellers of yonder idle and dissipated debauchees?—You were used to have more temper—more sense. Another person —ay, another that you and I once knew—he might have committed such a folly, and he would have acted perhaps in character—But you, who pretend to wisdom—for shame, for shame!—And indeed, when we talk of that, what wisdom was there in coming hither at all?—or what good purpose can your remaining here serve?—Surely you need not come, either to renew your own unhappiness or to augment mine.'

"To augment yours—God forbid!" answered Tyrrel. "No—I came hither only because,

after so many years of wandering, I longed to revisit the spot where all my hopes lay buried."

"Ay—buried is the word," she replied, "crushed down and buried when they budded fairest. I often think of it, Tyrrel; and there are times when, Heaven help me! I can think of little else—Look at me—you remember what I was—see what grief and solitude have made me."

She flung back the veil which surrounded her riding-hat, and which had hitherto hid her face. It was the same countenance which he had formerly known in all the bloom of early beauty; but though the beauty remained, the bloom was fled forever—Not the agitation of exercise—not that which arose from the pain and confusion of this unexpected interview, had called to poor Clara's cheek even the momentary semblance of colour. Her complexion was marble-white, like that of the finest piece of statuary.

"Is it possible?" said Tyrrel; "can grief have made such ravages?"

"Grief," replied Clara, "is the sickness of the mind, and its sister is the sickness of the body—they are twin-sisters, Tyrrel, and are sel-

dom long separate. Sometimes the body's disease comes first, and dims our eyes and palsies our hands, before the fire of our mind and of our intellect is quenched.—But mark me—soon after comes her cruel sister with her urn, and sprinkles cold dew on our hopes and our loves, our memory, our recollections, and our feelings, and shews us that they cannot survive the decay of our bodily powers."

"Alas!" said Tyrrel, "is it come to this?"

"To this," she replied, speaking from the rapid and irregular train of her own ideas, rather than comprehending the purport of his sorrowful exclamation,—"to this it must ever come, while immortal souls are wedded to the perishable substance of which our bodies are composed. There is another state, Tyrrel, in which it will be otherwise—God grant our time of enjoying it were come!"

She fell into a melancholy pause which Tyrrel was afraid to disturb. The quickness with which she spoke, marked but too plainly the irregular succession of thought, and he was obli-

ged to restrain the agony of his own feelings, rendered more acute by a thousand painful recollections, lest, by giving way to his expressions of grief, he should throw her into a still more disturbed state of mind.

"I did not think," she proceeded, "that after so horrible a separation, and so many years, I could have met you thus calmly and reasonably. But although what we were formerly to each other can never be forgotten, it is now all over, and we are only friends—Is it not so?"

Tyrrel was unable to reply.

"But I must not remain here," she said, "till the evening grows darker on me.—We shall meet again, Tyrrel—meet as friends—nothing more —You will come up to Shaws-castle and see me? —no need of secrecy now—my poor father is in his grave, and his prejudices sleep with him—my brother John is kind, though he is stern and severe sometimes—Indeed, Tyrrel, I believe he loves me, though he has taught me to tremble at his frown when I am in spirits, and talk too much—But he loves me, at least I think so, for

I am sure I love him ; and I try to go down amongst them yonder, and to endure their folly, and, all things considered, I do carry on the farce of life wonderfully well—We are but actors, you know, and the world but a stage."

"And ours has been a sad and a tragic scene," said Tyrrel, in the bitterness of his heart, unable any longer to refrain from speech.

"It has indeed—but, Tyrrel, when was it otherwise with engagements formed in youth and in folly? You and I would, you know, become men and women, while we were yet scarcely more than children—We have run, while yet in our nonage, through the passions and adventures of youth, and therefore we are now old before our day, and the winter of our life has come on ere its summer was well begun.—O Tyrrel! often and often have I thought of this—thought of it often?—Alas! when will the time come that I shall be able to think of anything else!"

The poor young lady sobbed bitterly, and her tears began to flow with a freedom which they had not probably enjoyed for a length of time. Tyr-

rel walked on by the side of her horse, which now prosecuted its road homewards, unable to devise a proper mode of addressing the unfortunate young lady, and fearing alike to awaken her passions and his own. Whatever he might have proposed to say, was disconcerted by the plain indications that her mind was clouded, more or less slightly, with a shade of insanity, which deranged, though it could not destroy, her powers of judgment.

At length he asked her, with as much calmness as he could assume—if she was contented—if aught could be done to render her situation more easy—if there was aught of which she could complain which he might be able to remedy? She answered gently, that she was calm and resigned, when her brother would permit her to stay at home; but that when she was brought into society, she experienced such a change as that which the water of the brook that slumbered in a crystalline pool of the rock might be supposed to feel, when gliding from its quiet bed, it becomes involved in the hurry of the cataract.

"But my brother Mowbray," she said, "thinks he is right,—and perhaps he is so. There are things on which we may ponder too long;—and were he mistaken, why should I not constrain myself in order to please him—there are so few left to whom I can now give either pleasure or pain?—I am a gay girl, too, in conversation, Tyrrel—still as gay for a moment, as when you used to chide me for my folly. So, now I have told you all,—I have one question to ask on my part—one question—if I had but breath to ask it—Is *he* still alive?"

"He lives," answered Tyrrel, but in a tone so low, that nought but the eager attention which Miss Mowbray paid could possibly have caught such feeble sounds.

"Lives!" she exclaimed,—"lives!—he lives, and the blood on your hand is not then indelibly imprinted—O Tyrrel, did you but know the joy which this assurance gives to me!"

"Joy!" replied Tyrrel—"joy that the wretch lives who has poisoned our happiness for ever?—lives, perhaps, to claim you for his own?"

"Never, never shall he—dare he do so," replied Clara, wildly, "while water can drown, cords strangle, steel pierce—while there is a precipice on the hill, a pool in the river—never—never!"

"Be not thus agitated, my dearest Clara," said Tyrrel; "I spoke I know not what—he lives indeed—but far distant, and, I trust, never again to re-visit Scotland."

He would have said more, but that, agitated with fear or passion, she struck her horse impatiently with her riding-whip. The spirited pony, thus stimulated and at the same time restrained, became intractable, and reared so much, that Tyrrel, fearful of the consequences, and trusting to Clara's skill as a horsewoman, thought he best consulted her safety in letting go the rein. The animal instantly sprung forwards on the broken and hilly path at a very rapid pace, and was soon lost to Tyrrel's anxious eyes.

As he stood pondering whether he ought not to follow Miss Mowbray towards Shaws-castle, in order to be satisfied that no accident had befallen her on the road, he heard the tread of a horse's

feet advancing hastily in the opposite direction, leading from the Hotel. Unwilling to be observed at this moment, he stepped aside under shelter of the underwood, and presently afterwards saw Mr Mowbray of St Ronan's, followed by a groom, ride hastily past his lurking-place, and pursue the same road which had been just taken by his sister. Their presence seemed to assure Miss Mowbray's safety, and so removed Tyrrel's chief reason for following her. Involved in deep and melancholy reflection upon what had passed, nearly satisfied that his longer residence in Clara's vicinity could only add to her unhappiness and his own, yet unable to tear himself from that neighbourhood, or to relinquish feelings which had become entwined with his heart-strings, he returned to his lodgings in the Aul'ton, in a state of mind very little to be envied.

Tyrrel, on entering his apartment, found that it was not lighted, nor were the Abigails of Mrs Dods quite so alert as a waiter at Long's might have been, to supply him with candles. Unapt at any time to exact much personal attendance,

and desirous to shun at that moment the necessity of speaking to any person whatsoever, even on the most trifling subject, he walked down into the kitchen to supply himself with what he wanted. He did not at first observe that Mrs Dods herself was present in this the very centre of her empire, far less that a lofty air of indignation was seated on that worthy matron's brow. At first it only vented itself in broken soliloquy and interjections; as, for example, "Vera bonnie wark this!—vera creditable wark, indeed!—a decent house to be disturbed at these hours—Keep a public—as weel keep a bedlam!"

Finding these murmurs attracted no attention, the dame placed herself betwixt her guest and the door, to which he was now retiring with his lighted candle, and demanded of him what was the meaning of such behaviour.

"Of what behaviour, madam?" said her guest, repeating her question in a tone of sternness and impatience so unusual with him, that perhaps she was sorry at the moment that she had provoked him out of his usual patient indifference; nay,

she might even feel intimidated at the altercation she had provoked, for the resentment of a quiet and patient person has always in it something formidable to the professed and habitual grumbler. But her pride was too great to think of a retreat, after having sounded the signal for contest, and so she continued, though in a tone somewhat lowered.

"Maister Tirl, I wad but just ask you, that are a man of sense, whether I hae ony right to take your behaviour weel? Here have you been these ten days and mair, eating the best and drinking the best, and taking up the best room in my house; and now to think of your gaun down and taking up with yon idle hare-brained cattle at the Waal—I maun e'en be plain wi' ye —I like nane of the fair-fashioned folk that can say My Jo, and think it no; and therefore——"

"Mrs Dods," said Tyrrel, interrupting her, "I have no time at present for trifles—I am obliged to you for your attention while I have been in your house; but the disposal of my time, here or elsewhere, must be according to my own ideas

of pleasure or business—If you are tired of me as a guest, send in your bill to-morrow."

"My bill!" said Mrs Dods; "my bill to-morrow! And what for no wait till Saturday, when it may be cleared atween us, plack and bawbee, as it was on Saturday last?"

"Well—we will talk of it to-morrow, Mrs Dods—Good night." And he withdrew accordingly.

Luckie Dods stood ruminating for a moment. "The deil's in him," she said, "for he winna bide being thrawn. And I think the deil's in me too for thrawing him, sic a canny lad, and sae gude a customer;—and I am judging he has something on his mind—want of siller it canna be—I am sure if I thought that, I wadna care about my small thing.—But want o' siller it canna be—he pays ower the shillings as if they were sclate stanes, and that's no the way that folks part with their siller when there's but little on't—I ken weel eneugh how a customer looks that's near the grund of the purse.—Weel! I hope he winna mind onything of this nonsense the

morn, and I'll try to guide my tongue something better—Hegh, sirs! but, as the minister says, it's an unruly member—troth, I am whiles ashamed o't mysel."

CHAPTER X.

RESOURCES.

Come, let me have thy counsel, for I need it ;
Thou art of those, who better help their friends
With sage advice, than usurers with gold,
Or brawlers with their swords—I'll trust to thee,
For I ask only from thee words, not deeds.
The Devil hath met his Match.

The day of which we last gave the events chanced to be Monday, and two days therefore intervened betwixt it and that for which the entertainment was fixed, which was to assemble in the halls of the Lord of the Manor the flower of the company now at St Ronan's Well. The interval was but brief for the preparations necessary on an occasion so unusual; since the house, though delightfully situated, was in very in-

different repair, and for years had never received any visitors, except when by chance some blithe bachelor or fox-hunter shared the hospitality of Mr Mowbray; an event which became daily more and more uncommon; for, as he himself almost lived at the Well, he generally contrived to receive his companions where it could be done without expense to himself. Besides, the health of his sister afforded an irresistible apology to any of those old-fashioned Scottish gentlemen, who might be too apt, (in the rudeness of more primitive days,) to consider a friend's house as their own. Mr Mowbray was now, however, to the great delight of all his companions, nailed down, by invitation given and accepted, and they looked forward to the accomplishment of his promise, with the eagerness which the promise of some entertaining novelty never fails to produce amongst idlers.

A good deal of trouble devolved on Mr Mowbray, and his trusty agent Mr Micklewham, before something like decent preparation could be made for the ensuing entertainment; and they were left to their unassisted endeavours

by Clara, who, during both the Tuesday and Wednesday, obstinately kept herself secluded; nor could her brother, either by threats or flattery, extort from her any light concerning her purpose on the approaching and important Thursday. To do John Mowbray justice, he loved his sister as much as he was capable of loving anything but himself; and when, in several arguments, he had the mortification to find that she was not to be prevailed on to afford her assistance, he, without complaint, quietly set himself to do the best he could by his own unassisted judgment or opinion concerning the previous arrangements.

This was not so easy a task as might be supposed; for Mowbray was ambitious of that character of *ton* and elegance, which masculine faculties alone are seldom capable of attaining on such momentous occasions. The more solid materials of a collation were indeed to be obtained for money from the next market town, and were purchased accordingly; but he felt it was likely to present the vulgar plenty of a farmer's feast, instead of the elegant entertainment, which might be an-

nounced in a corner of the county paper, as given by John Mowbray, Esq. of St Ronan's, to the gay and fashionable company assembled at that celebrated spring. There was likely to be all sorts of error and irregularity in dishing, and in sending up; for Shaws-Castle boasted neither an accomplished house-keeper, nor a kitchen-maid with a hundred pair of hands to execute her mandates. Everything domestic was on the minutest system of economy consistent with ordinary decency, excepting in the stables, which were excellent and well kept. But can a groom of the stables perform the labours of a groom of the chambers? or can the game-keeper arrange in tempting order the carcases of the birds he has shot, strew them with flowers, and garnish them with piquant sauces? It would be as reasonable to expect a gallant soldier to act as undertaker, and conduct the funeral of the enemy he has slain.

In a word, Mowbray talked, and consulted, and advised, and squabbled, with the deaf cook, and a little old man whom he called the butler, until he at length perceived so little chance

of bringing order out of confusion, or making the least advantageous impression on such obdurate understandings as he had to deal with, that he fairly committed the whole matter of the collation, with two or three hearty curses, to the charge of the officials principally concerned, and proceeded to take the state of the furniture and apartments under his consideration.

Here he found himself almost equally helpless; for what male wit is adequate to the thousand little coquetries practised in such arrangements? how can masculine eyes judge of the degree of *demi-jour* which is to be admitted into a decorated apartment, or discriminate where the broad light should be suffered to fall on a tolerable picture, where it should be excluded, lest the stiff daub of a periwigged grandsire should become too ridiculously prominent? And if men are unfit for weaving such a fairy web of light and darkness as may best suit furniture, ornaments, and complexions, how shall they be adequate to the yet more mysterious office of arranging, while they disarrange, the various movables in the apartment? so that while all has the air of

negligence and chance, the seats are placed as if they had been transported by a wish to the spot most suitable for accommodation; stiffness and confusion are at once avoided, the company are neither limited to a formal circle of chairs, nor exposed to break their noses over wandering stools; but the arrangements seem to correspond to what ought to be the tone of the conversation, easy, without being confused, and regulated, without being constrained or stiffened.

Then how can a clumsy male wit attempt the arrangement of all the *chiffonerie* by which old snuff-boxes, heads of canes, pomander boxes, lanmer beads, and all the trash usually found in the pigeon-holes of the bureaus of old-fashioned ladies, may be now brought into play, by throwing them, carelessly grouped with other unconsidered trifles, such as are to be seen in the windows of a pawnbroker's shop, upon a marble *encoignure*, or a mosaic work table, thereby turning to advantage the trash and trinketry, which all the old maids or magpies, who have inhabited the mansion for a century, have

contrived to accumulate. With what admiration of the ingenuity of the fair artist have I sometimes pried into these miscellaneous groupes of *pseudo-bijouterie*, and seen the great grandsire's thumb-ring couchant with the coral and bells of the first-born—and the boatswain's whistle of some old naval uncle, or his silver tobacco-box, redolent of Oroonoko, happily grouped with the mother's ivory comb-case, still odorous of musk, and with some virgin aunt's tortoise-shell spectacle-case, and the eagle's talon of ebony, with which, in the days of long and stiff stays, our grandmothers were wont to alleviate any little irritation in their back or shoulders. Then there was the silver strainer, on which, in more economical times than ours, the lady of the house placed the tea-leaves, after the very last drop had been exhausted, that they might afterwards be hospitably divided among the company, to be eaten with sugar, and with bread and butter. Blessings upon a fashion which has rescued from the claws of abigails, and the melting-pot of the silver-smith, those neglected *cimelia*, for the be-

nefit of antiquaries and the decoration of side-tables! But who shall presume to place them there, unless under the direction of female taste? and of that Mr Mowbray, though possessed of a large stock of such treasures, was for the present entirely deprived.

This digression upon his difficulties is already too long, or I might mention the laird's inexperience in the art of making the worse appear the better garnishment, of hiding a darned carpet with a floor-cloth, and flinging a shawl over a faded and thread-bare sofa. But I have said enough, and more than enough, to explain his dilemma to any unassisted bachelor, who, without mother, sister, or cousin, without skilful housekeeper, or experienced clerk of the kitchen, or valet of parts and figure, adventures to give an entertainment, and aspires to make it elegant and *comme il faut*.

The sense of his insufficiency was the more vexatious to Mowbray, as he was aware he would find sharp critics in the ladies, and particularly in his regular rival, Lady Penelope Penfeather. He was, therefore, incessant in his exertions; and for two whole days ordered and disordered, de-

manded, commanded, countermanded, and reprimanded, without pause or cessation. The companion, for he could not be termed an assistant of his labours, was his trusty agent, who trotted from room to room after him, affording him exactly the same degree of sympathy which a dog doth to his master when distressed in mind, by looking in his face from time to time with a piteous gaze, to assure him that he partakes of his trouble, though he neither comprehends the cause or the extent of it.

At length, when Mowbray had got some matters arranged to his mind, and abandoned a great many which he would willingly have put in better order, he sat down to dinner upon the Wednesday preceding the appointed day, with his worthy aid-de-camp, Mr Micklewham; and, after bestowing a few muttered curses upon the whole concern, and the fantastic old maid who had brought him into the scrape, declared that all things might now go to the devil their own way, for so sure as his name was John Mowbray, he would trouble himself no more about them.

Keeping this doughty resolution, he sat down

to dinner with his counsel learned in the law; and speedily they dispatched the dish of chops which was set before them, and the better part of the bottle of old port, which served for its menstruum.

"We are well enough now," said Mowbray, "though we have had none of their d—d kickshaws."

"A wame-fou' is a wame-fou'," said the writer, swabbing his greasy chops, "whether it be of the barley-meal or the bran."

"A cart-horse thinks so," said Mowbray; "but we must do as others do, and gentlemen and ladies are of a different opinion."

"The waur for themselves and the country baith, St Ronan's,—it's the jinketting and the jirbling with tea and with trumpery that brings our nobles to ninepence, and mony a het ha'-house to a hired lodging in the Abbey."

The young gentleman paused for a few minutes—filled a bumper, and pushed the bottle to the senior—then said abruptly, "Do you believe in luck, Mick?"

"In luck," answered the attorney, "what do you mean by the question?"

"Why, because I believe in luck myself—in a good or bad run of luck at cards."

"You wad have mair luck the day if you had never touched them," replied his confidant.

"That is not the question now," said Mowbray; "but what I wonder at is the wretched chance that has attended us miserable Lairds of St Ronan's for more than a hundred years, that we have always been getting worse in the world, and never better. Never has there been such a backsliding generation, as the parson would say—half the country once belonged to my ancestors, and now the last furrows of it seem to be flying."

"Fleeing!" said the writer, "they are barking and fleeing baith.—This Shaws-Castle here, I'se warrant it flee up the chimney after the rest, were it not weel fastened down with your grandfather's tailzie."

"Damn the tailzie!" said Mowbray; "if they had meant to keep up their estate, they should have entailed it when it was worth keeping;—to

tie a man down to such an insignificant thing as St Ronan's, is like tethering a horse on six roods of a Highland moor."

"Ye have broke weel in on the mailing by your feus down at the Well," said Micklewham, "and raxed ower the tether maybe a wee bit farther than ye had any right to do."

"It was by your advice, was it not?" said the laird.

"I'se ne'er deny it, St Ronan's," said the writer; "but I am such a good-natured guse, that I just set about pleasing you as an auld wife pleases a bairn."

"Ay," said the man of pleasure, "when she reaches it a knife to cut its own fingers with.—These acres would have been safe enough, if it had not been for your damned advice."

"And yet you were grumbling e'en now," said the man of business, "that you have not the power to gar the whole estate flee like a wild duck across a bog? Troth, you need care little about it; for if you have incurred an irritancy—and sae thinks Mr Wisebehind, the advocate, upon an A. B. memorial, that I laid before him

—your sister, or your sister's goodman, if she should take the fancy to marry, might bring a declarator, and evict St Ronan's frae ye in the course of twa or three sessions."

"My sister will never marry," said John Mowbray.

"That's easily said," replied the writer; "but as broken a ship's come to land. If ony body kend o' the chance she has of the estate, there's mony a weel-doing man would think little of the bee in her bonnet."

"Harkye, Mr Micklewham," said the laird, "I will be obliged to you if you will speak of Miss Mowbray with the respect due to her father's daughter, and my sister."

"Nae offence, St Ronan's, nae offence," answered the man of law; "but ilka man maun speak sae as to be understood, that is, when he speaks about business. Ye ken yoursel, that Miss Clara is no just like other folks; and were I you—it's my duty to speak plain—I wad e'en gie in a bit scroll of a petition to the Lords, to be appointed Curator Bonis, in respect of her incapacity to manage her own affairs."

" Micklewham," said Mowbray, " you are a——" and then he stopped short.

" What am I, Mr Mowbray ?" said Micklewham, somewhat sternly—" What am I ? I wad be glad to ken what I am."

" A very good lawyer, I dare say," replied St Ronan's, who was too much in the power of his agent to give way to his first impulse. " But I must tell you, that rather than take such a measure against poor Clara, as you recommend, I would give her up the estate, and become an ostler or a postilion for the rest of my life."

" Ah, St Ronan's," said the man of law, " if you had wished to keep up the auld house, you should have taken another trade, than to become an ostler or a postilion. What ailed you, man, to have been a lawyer as weel as other folks ? My auld master had a wee bit Latin about *rerum dominos gentemque togatam*, whilk signified, he said, that all lairds should be lawyers."

" All lawyers are likely to become lairds, I think," replied Mowbray ; " they purchase our acres by the thousand, and pay us, according to

the old story, with a multiplepoinding, as your learned friends call it, Mr Micklewham."

"Weel—and mightna you have purchased as weel as other folks?"

"Not I," replied the laird. "I have no turn for that service. I should only have wasted bombazine on my shoulders, and flour upon my three-tailed wig—should but have lounged away my mornings in the Outer-House, and my evenings at the playhouse, and acquired no more law than what would have made me a wise Justice at a Small-debt Court."

"If you gained little, you would have lost as little," said Micklewham; "and albeit you were nae great gun at the bar, ye might aye have gotten a Sheriffdom, or a Commissaryship, amang the lave, to keep the banes green; and sae ye might have saved your estate from deteriorating, if ye didna mend it mickle."

"Yes, but I could not have had the chance of doubling it, as I might have done," answered Mowbray, "had that inconstant jade, Fortune, but stood a moment faithful to me. I tell you,

Mick, that I have been, within this twelvemonth, worth a hundred thousand—worth fifty thousand—worth nothing, but the remnant of this wretched estate, which is too little to do one good while it is mine, though, were it sold, I could start again, and mend my hand a little."

"Ay, ay, just fling the helve after the hatchet—that's a' you think of. What signifies winning a hundred thousand pounds, if you win them to lose them a' again?"

"What signifies it?" replied Mowbray. "Why, it signifies as much to a man of spirit, as having won a battle signifies to a general—no matter that he is beaten afterwards in his turn, he knows there is luck for him as well as others, and so he has spirit to try it again. Here is the young Earl of Etherington will be amongst us in a day or two—they say he is up to everything—if I had but five hundred to begin with, I should be soon up to him."

"Mr Mowbray," said Micklewham, "I am sorry for ye. I have been your house's man-of-business—I may say, in some measure, your ser-

vant—and now I am to see an end of it all, and just by the lad that I thought maist likely to set it up again better than ever; for, to do ye justice, you have aye had an ee to your ain interest, sae far as your lights gaed. It brings tears into my auld een."

"Never weep for the matter, Mick," answered Mowbray; "some of it will stick, my old boy, in your pockets, if not in mine—your service will not be altogether gratuitous, my old friend—the labourer is worthy of his hire."

"Weel I wot is he," said the writer; "but double fees would hardly carry folk through some wark. But if ye will have siller, ye maun have siller—but, I warrant, it goes just where the rest gaed."

"No, by twenty devils!" exclaimed Mowbray, "to fail this time is impossible—Jack Wolverine was too strong for Etherington at anything he could name; and I can beat Wolverine from the Land's-End to Johnnie Groat's —but there must be something to go upon—the blunt must be had, Mick."

"Very likely—nae doubt—that is always

provided it *can* be had," answered the legal adviser.

"That's your business, my old cock," said Mowbray. "This youngster will be here perhaps to-morrow, with money in both pockets—he takes up his rents as he comes down, Mick—think of that, my old friend."

"Weel for them that has rents to take up," said Micklewham; "ours are lying rather ower low to be lifted at present.—But are ye sure this Earl is a man to mell with?—are ye sure ye can win of him, and that if you do, he can pay his losings, Mr Mowbray?—because I have kend mony ane come for wool, and gang hame shorn; and though ye are a clever young gentleman, and I am bound to suppose ye ken as much about life as most folk, and all that; yet some gate or other ye have aye come off at the losing hand, as ye have ower mickle reason to ken this day—howbeit——"

"Oh, the devil take your gossip, my dear Mick! If you can give no help, spare drowning me with your pother.—Why, man, I was a fresh hand—had my apprentice-fees to pay—and these

are no trifles, Mick.—But what of that?—I am free of the company now, and can trade on my own bottom."

"Aweel, aweel, I wish it may be sae," said Micklewham.

"It will be so, and it shall be so, my trusty friend," replied Mowbray, cheerily, "so you will but help me to the stock to trade with."

"The stock?—what d'ye ca' the stock? I ken nae stock that ye have left."

"But *you* have plenty, my old boy—Come, sell out a few of your three per cents; I will pay difference—interest—exchange—everything."

"Ay, ay—everything or naething," answered Micklewham; "but as ye are sae very pressing, I hae been thinking—Whan is the siller wanted?"

"This instant—this day—to-morrow at farthest!" exclaimed the proposed borrower.

"Wh—ew!" whistled the lawyer, with a long prolongation of the note; "the thing is impossible."

"It must be, Mick, for all that," answered Mr Mowbray, who knew by experience that

impossible, when uttered by his accommodating friend in this tone, only, when interpreted, meant extremely difficult.

"Then it must be by Miss Clara selling her stock, now that ye speak of stock," said Micklewham; "I wonder ye didna think of this before."

"I wish you had been dumb rather than that you had mentioned it now," said Mowbray, starting, as if stung by an adder—"What, Clara's pittance!—the trifle my aunt left her for her own fanciful expenses—her own little private store, that she puts to so many good purposes—Poor Clara, that has so little!—And why not rather your own, Master Micklewham, who call yourself the friend and servant of our family?"

"Ay, St Ronan's," answered Micklewham, "that is a' very true—but service is nae inheritance; and as for friendship, it begins at hame, as wise folks have said lang before our time. And for that matter, I think they that are nearest sib should take maist risk. You are nearer and dearer to your sister, St Ronan's, than you are to poor Saunders Micklewham,

that hasna sae mickle gentle blood as would supper up a hungry flea."

"I will not do this," said St Ronan's, walking up and down with much agitation; for, selfish as he was, he loved his sister, and loved her the more on account of those peculiarities which rendered his protection indispensable to her comfortable existence—"I will not," he said, "pillage her, come on't what will. I will rather go a volunteer to the continent, and die like a gentleman."

He continued to pace the room in a moody silence, which began to disturb his companion, who had not been hitherto accustomed to see his patron take matters so deeply. At length he made an attempt to attract the attention of the silent and sullen ponderer.

"Mr Mowbray"—no answer—"I was saying, St Ronan's"—still no reply. "I have been thinking about this matter—and——"

"And *what*, sir?" said St Ronan's, stopping short, and speaking in a stern tone of voice.

"And to speak truth, I see little feasibility in the matter ony way; for if ye had the siller in

your pocket to-day, it would be a' in the Earl of Etherington's the morn."

"Pshaw! you are a fool."

"That is not unlikely," answered Micklewham; "but so is Sir Bingo Binks, and yet he's had the better of you, St Ronans, this twa or three times."

"It is false!—he has not," answered St Ronan's, fiercely.

"Weel I wot," resumed Micklewham, "he took you in about the salmon fish, and some other wager ye lost to him this very day."

"I tell you once more, Micklewham, you are a fool, and no more up to my trim than you are to the longitude.—Bingo is got shy—I must give him a little line, that is all—then I shall strike him to purpose—I am as sure of him as I am of the other—I know the fly they will both rise to—this cursed want of five hundred will do me out of ten thousand."

"If you are so certain of being the bangster—so very certain, I mean, of sweeping stakes, what harm will Miss Clara come to by your having the

use of her siller? you can make it up to her for the risk ten times told."

"And so I can, by heaven!" said St Ronan's. "Mick, you are right, and I am a scrupulous, chicken-hearted fool. Clara shall have a thousand for her poor five hundred—she shall, by ——. And I will carry her to Edinburgh for a season, or perhaps to London, and we will have the best advice for her case, and the best company to divert. And if they think her a little odd—why, d—n me, I am her brother, and will bear her through it. Yes—yes—you're right; there can be no hurt in borrowing five hundred of her for a few days, when such profit may be made on't, both for her and me.—Here, fill the glasses, my old boy, and drink success to it, for you are right."

"Here is success to it, with all my heart," answered Micklewham, heartily glad to see his patron's sanguine temper arrive at this desirable conclusion, and yet desirous to hedge in his own credit; "but it is *you* are right, and not *me*, for I advise nothing excepting on your assurances, that you can make your ain of this English earl,

and of this Sir Bingo—and if you can but do that, I am sure it would be unwise and unkind in ony ane of your friends to stand in your light."

"True, Mick, true," answered Mowbray.—"And yet dice and cards are but bones and pasteboard, and the best horse ever started may slip a shoulder before he get to the winning-post—and so I wish Clara's venture had not been in such a bottom.—But, hang it, care killed a cat—I can hedge as well as any one, if the odds turn up against me—so let us have the cash, Mick."

"Aha! but there go two words to that bargain—the stock stands in my name, and Tam Turnpenny the banker's, as trustees for Miss Clara—Now, get you her letter to us, desiring us to sell out and to pay you the proceeds, and Tam Turnpenny will let you have five hundred pounds *instanter*, on the faith of the transaction; for I fancy you would desire a' the stock to be sold out, and it will produce more than six hundred, or seven hundred pounds either—and I reckon you will be for selling out the whole—it's needless making twa bites of a cherry."

"True," answered Mowbray; "since we must

be rogues, or something like it, let us make it worth our while at least; so give me a form of the letter, and Clara shall copy it—that is, if she consents; for you know she can keep her own opinion as well as any other woman in the world."

"And that," said Micklewham, "is as the wind will keep its way, preach to it as ye like. But if I might advise about Miss Clara—I wad say naething mair than that I was stressed for the penny money; for I mistake her mickle if she would like to see you ganging to pitch and toss wi' this lord and tither baronet for her aunt's three per cents—I ken she has some queer notions—she gies away the feck of the dividends on that very stock in downright charity."

"And I am in jeopardy to rob the poor as well as my sister," said Mowbray, filling once more his own glass and his friend's. "Come, Mick, no skylights—here is Clara's health—she is an angel—and I am—what I will not call myself, and suffer no other man to call me.—But I shall win this time—I am sure I shall, since Clara's fortune depends upon it."

"Now, I think, on the other hand," said

Micklewham, "that if anything should chance wrang, and Heaven kens that the best laid schemes will gang ajee, it will be a great comfort to think that the ultimate losers will only be the poor folk, that have the parish between them and absolute starvation—if your sister spent her ain siller, it would be a very different story."

"Hush, Mick—for God's sake, hush, mine honest friend," said Mowbray; "it is quite true; thou art a rare counsellor in time of need, and hast as happy a manner of reconciling a man's conscience with his necessities, as might set up a score of casuists; but beware, my most zealous counsellor and confessor, how you drive the nail too far—I promise you some of the chaffing you are at just now rather abates my pluck.—Well—give me your scroll—I will to Clara with it—though I would rather meet the best shot in Britain, with ten paces of green sod betwixt us." So saying, he left the apartment.

CHAPTER XI.

FRATERNAL LOVE.

Nearest of blood should still be next in love;
And when I see these happy children playing,
While William gathers flowers for Ellen's ringlets,
And Ellen dresses flies for William's angle,
I scarce can think, that in advancing life,
Coldness, unkindness, interest, or suspicion,
Can e'er divide that unity so sacred,
Which Nature bound at birth.

Anonymous.

When Mowbray had left his dangerous adviser, in order to steer the course which his agent had indicated, without offering to recommend it, he went to the little parlour which his sister was wont to term her own, and in which she spent great part of her time. It was fitted up with a sort of fanciful neatness; and in its perfect arrangement and good order, formed a strong contrast to the other apartments of the old and neglected mansion-house. A number of little articles lay on

the work-table, indicating the elegant, and, at the same time, the unsettled turn of the inhabitant's mind. There were unfinished drawings, blotted music, needle-work of various kinds, and many other little female tasks, all undertaken with zeal, and so far prosecuted with art and elegance, but all flung aside before any of them was completed.

Clara herself sat upon a little low couch by the window, reading, or at least turning over the leaves of a book, in which she seemed to read. But instantly starting up when she saw her brother, she ran towards him with the most cordial cheerfulness.

"Welcome, welcome, my dear John; this is very kind of you to come to visit your recluse sister. I have been trying to nail my eyes and my understanding to a stupid book here, because they say too much thought is not quite good for me. But, either the man's dulness, or my want of the power of attending, makes my eyes pass over the page, just as one seems to read in a dream, without being able to comprehend one word of the matter. You shall talk to me,

and that will do better. What can I give you to shew that you are welcome? I am afraid tea is all I have to offer, and that you set too little store by."

"I shall be glad of a cup at present," said Mowbray, "for I wish to speak with you."

"Then Jessy shall make it ready instantly," said Miss Mowbray, ringing, and giving orders to her waiting-maid—"but you must not be ungrateful, John, and plague me with any of the ceremonial for your fete—'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' I will attend and play my part as prettily as you can desire; but to think of it beforehand, would make both my head and heart ache; and so I beg you will spare me on the subject."

"Why, you wild kitten," said Mowbray, "you turn every day more shy of human communication—we shall have you take the woods, one day, and become as savage as the Princess Caraboo. But I will plague you about nothing if I can help it. If matters go not smooth on the great day, they must e'en blame the dull thick head that had no fair lady to help him in his

need. But, Clara, I had something more material to say to you—something indeed of the last importance."

"What is it?" said Clara, in a tone of voice approaching to a scream—"In the name of God, what is it? You know not how you terrify me."

"Nay, you start at a shadow, Clara," answered her brother. "It is no such uncommon matter neither—good faith, it is the most common distress in the world, so far as I know the world—I am sorely pinched for money."

"Is that all?" replied Clara, in a tone which seemed to her brother as much to under-rate the difficulty, when it was explained, as her fears had exaggerated it before she heard its nature.

"Is that all? Indeed it is all, and comprehends a great deal of vexation. I shall be hard run unless I can get a certain sum of money—and I must e'en ask you if you can help me?"

"Help you? Yes, with all my heart—but you know my purse is a light one—more than half of my last dividend is in it, however, and I am sure, John, I will be happy if it can serve

you—especially as that will at least shew that your wants are but small ones."

"Alas, Clara, if you would help me, you must draw the neck of the goose which lays the golden egg—you must lend me the whole stock."

"And why not, John, if it will do you a kindness? Are you not my natural guardian? Are you not a kind one? And is not my little fortune entirely at your disposal? You will, I am sure, do all for the best."

"I fear I may not," said Mowbray, starting from her, and more distressed by her sudden and unsuspicious compliance, than he would have been by difficulties, or remonstrance. In the latter case, he would have stifled the pangs of conscience amid the manœuvres which he must have resorted to for obtaining her acquiescence. As matters stood, there was all the difference that there is between slaughtering a tame and unresisting animal, and pursuing wild game, until the animation of the sportsman's exertions overcomes the internal sense of his own cruelty. The same idea occurred to Mowbray himself.

"By G——," he said, "this is like shooting the bird sitting.—Clara," he added, "I fear this money will scarce be employed as you would wish."

"Employ it as you yourself please, my dearest brother, and I will believe it is all for the best."

"Nay, I am doing for the best," he replied; "at least, I am doing what must be done, for I see no other way through it—so all you have to do is to copy this paper, and bid adieu to bank dividends—for a little while at least. I trust soon to double this little matter for you, if Fortune will but stand my friend."

"Do not trust to Fortune, John," said Clara, smiling, though with an expression of deep melancholy. "Alas! she has never been a friend to our family—not at least for many a day."

"She favours the bold, say my old grammatical exercises," answered her brother, "and I must trust her, were she as changeable as a weathercock.—And yet—if she should jilt me!—What will you do—what will you say, Clara, if I am unable, contrary to my hope, trust, and expecta-

tion; to repay you this money within a short time?"

"Do?" answered Clara; "I must do without it, you know; and for saying, I will not say a word."

"True," replied Mowbray, "but your little expenses—your charities—your halt and blind—your round of paupers?"

"Well, I can manage all that too. Look you here, John, how many half-worked trifles there are. The needle or the pencil is the resource of all distressed heroines, you know; and I promise you, though I have been a little idle and unsettled of late, yet, when I do set about it, no Emmeline or Ethelinde of them all ever sent such loads of trumpery to market as I shall, or made such wealth as I will do. I dare say Lady Penelope, and all the gentry at the Well, will purchase, and will raffle, and do all sort of things to encourage the pensive performer. I will send them such lots of landscapes with sap-green trees, and mazareen-blue rivers, and portraits that will terrify the originals themselves—and handkerchiefs and turbans, with needlework scallopped

exactly like the walks on the Belvidere—Why, I shall become a little fortune in the first season."

"No, Clara," said John, gravely, for a virtuous resolution had gained the upperhand in his bosom, while his sister ran on in this manner,—"We will do something better than all this. If this kind help of yours does not fetch me through, I am determined I will cut the whole concern. It is but standing a laugh or two, and hearing a gay fellow say, Damme, Jack, are ye turned clod-hopper at last?—that is the worst. Dogs, horses, and all, shall go to the hammer; we will keep nothing but your pony, and I will trust to a pair of excellent legs. There is enough left of the old acres to keep us in the way you like best, and that I will learn to like. I will work in the garden, and work in the forest, mark my own trees, and cut them myself, keep my own accounts, and send Saunders Micklewham to the devil."

"That last is the best resolution of all, John," said Clara; "and if such a day should come round, I would be the happiest of living creatures—I would not have a grief left in the world

—if I had, you should never see or hear of it—it should lie here," she said, pressing her hand on her bosom, "buried as deep as a funereal urn in a cold sepulchre. Oh! could we not begin such a life to-morrow? If it is absolutely necessary that this trifle of money should be got rid of first, throw it into the river, and think you have lost it amongst gamblers and horse-jockeys."

Clara's eyes, which she fondly fixed on her brother's face, glowed through the tears which her enthusiasm called into them, while she thus addressed him. Mowbray, on his part, kept his looks fixed on the ground, with a flush on his cheek, that expressed at once false pride and real shame.

At length he looked up:—"My dear girl," he said, "how foolishly you talk, and how foolishly I, that have twenty things to do, stand here listening to you! All will go smooth on *my* plan—if it should not, we have yours in reserve, and I swear to you I will adopt it. The trifle which this letter of yours enables me to command, may have luck in it, and we must not throw up the cards while we have a chance of the

game.—Were I to cut from this moment, these few hundreds would make us little better or little worse—so you see we have two strings to our bow. Luck is sometimes against me, that is true—but upon true principle, and playing on the square, I can manage the best of them, or my name is not Mowbray. Adieu, my dearest Clara." So saying, he kissed her cheek with a more than usual degree of affection.

Ere he could raise himself from his stooping posture, she threw her arm kindly over his neck, and said with a tone of the deepest interest, "My dearest brother, your slightest wish has been, and ever shall be, a law to me—Oh! if you would but grant me one request in return!"

"What is it, you silly girl?" said Mowbray, gently disengaging himself from her hold.—"What is it you can have to ask that needs such a solemn preface?—Remember, I hate prefaces; and when I happen to open a book, always skip them."

"Without preface, then, my dearest brother, will you, for my sake, avoid those quarrels in which the people yonder are eternally engaged?

I never go down there but I hear of some new brawl; and I never lay my head down to sleep, but I dream that you are the victim of it. Even last night——"

"Nay, Clara, if you begin to tell your dreams, we shall never have done. Sleeping, to be sure, is the most serious employment of your life—for as to eating, you hardly match a sparrow; but I entreat you to sleep without dreaming, or to keep your visions to yourself.—Why do you keep such fast hold of me?—What on earth can you be afraid of?—Surely you do not think the block-head Binks, or any other of the good folks below yonder, dared to turn on me? Egad, I wish they would pluck up a little mettle, that I might have an excuse for drilling them. Gad, I would soon teach them to follow at heel."

"No, John," replied his sister; "it is not of such men as these that I have any fear—and yet, cowards are sometimes driven to desperation, and become more dangerous than better men—yet it is not such as these that I fear. But there are men in the world whose qualities are beyond their seeming—whose spirit and courage lie hidden,

like metals in the mine, under an unmarked or a plain exterior.—You may meet with such—you are rash and headlong, and apt to exercise your wit without always weighing consequences, and thus——"

"On my word, Clara," answered Mowbray, "you are in a most sermonizing humour this morning!—the parson himself could not have been more logical or profound. You have only to divide your discourse into heads, and garnish it with conclusions for use, and conclusions for doctrine, and it might be preached before a whole presbytery, with every chance of instruction and edification. But I am a man of the world, my little Clara; and though I wish to go in death's way as little as possible, I must not fear the Raw-head and Bloody Bones neither.—And who the devil is to put the question to me?—I must know that, Clara, for you have some especial person in your eye when you bid me take care of quarrelling."

Clara could not become paler than was her usual complexion; but her voice faultered as she eagerly assured her brother, that she had no particular person in her thoughts.

"Clara," said her brother, "do you remember, when there was a report of a bogle in the upper orchard, when we were both children?—Do you remember how you were perpetually telling me to take care of the bogle, and keep away from its haunts?—And do you remember my going on purpose to detect the bogle, finding the cow-boy, with a shirt about him, busied in pulling pears, and treating him to a handsome drubbing?—I am the same Jack Mowbray still, as ready to face danger, and unmask imposition; and your fears, Clara, will only make me watch more closely, till I find out the real object of them. If you warn me of quarrelling with some one, it must be because you know some one who is not unlikely to quarrel with me. You are a flighty and fanciful girl, but you have sense enough not to trouble either yourself or me on a point of honour, save when there is some real reason for it."

Clara once more protested, and it was with the deepest anxiety to be believed, that what she had said arose only out of the general consequences which she apprehended from the line of conduct

her brother had adopted, and which, in her apprehension, was so likely to engage him in the broils which divided the good company at the Spring. Mowbray listened to her apology with an air of doubt, or rather incredulity; and at length replied, "Well, Clara, whether I am right or wrong in my guess, it would be cruel to torment you any more, remembering what you have just done for me. But do justice to your brother, and believe, that when you have anything to ask of him, an explicit declaration of your wishes will answer your purpose much better than any ingenious oblique attempts to influence me. Give up all thoughts of such, my dear Clara—you are but a poor manœuvrer, but were you the very Machiavel of your sex, you should not turn the flank of John Mowbray."

He left the room as he spoke, and did not return, though his sister twice called upon him.—It is true that she uttered the word brother so faintly, that perhaps the sound did not reach his ears.—"He is gone," she said, "and I have had no power to speak out! I am like the unhappy creatures, who, it is said, lie under a potent charm,

that prevents them alike from shedding tears and from confessing their crimes—Yes, there is a spell on this unhappy heart, and either that must be dissolved, or this must break."

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHALLENGE.

A slight note I have about me, for the delivery of which you must excuse me. It is an office which friendship calls upon me to do, and no way offensive to you, as I desire nothing but right on both sides.

King and No King.

THE intelligent reader may recollect, that Tyrrel departed from the Fox Hotel on terms not altogether so friendly towards the company as those under which he entered it. Indeed it occurred to him, that he might probably have heard something farther on the subject, though, amidst matters of deeper and more anxious consideration, the idea only passed hastily through his mind; and two days having gone over without any message from Sir Bingo Binks, the whole affair glided entirely out of his memory.

The truth was, that although never old woman took more trouble to collect and blow up with her bellows the embers of her decayed fire, than Captain MacTurk kindly undertook, for the purpose of puffing into a flame the dying sparkles of the Baronet's courage; yet two days were spent in fruitless conferences before he could attain the desired point. He found Sir Bingo on these different occasions in all sorts of different moods of mind, and disposed to view the thing in all shades of light, except what the Captain thought was the true one.—He was in a drunken humour —in a sullen humour—in a thoughtless and vilipending humour—in every humour but a fighting one. And when Captain MacTurk talked of the reputation of the company at the Well, Sir Bingo pretended to take offence, said the company might go to the devil, and hinted that he "did them sufficient honour by gracing them with his countenance, but did not mean to constitute them any judges of his affairs. The fellow was a raff, and he would have nothing to do with him."

Captain MacTurk would willingly have taken measures against the Baronet, as in a state of con-

tumacy, but was opposed by Winterblossom and other members of the committee, who considered Sir Bingo as too important and illustrious a member of their society to be rashly expelled from a place not honoured by the residence of many persons of rank; and finally insisted that nothing should be done in the matter without the advice of Mowbray, whose preparations for his solemn festival upon the following Thursday, had so much occupied him that he had not lately appeared at the Well.

In the meanwhile, the gallant Captain seemed to experience as much distress of mind, as if some stain had lain on his own most unblemished of reputations. He went up and down upon the points of his toes, rising up on his instep with a a jerk which at once expressed vexation and defiance—He carried his nose turned up in the air, like that of a pig when he snuffs the approaching storm—He spoke in monosyllables when he spoke at all; and what perhaps illustrated in the strongest manner the depth of his feelings, he refused, in face of the whole company, to pledge Sir Bingo in a glass of the Baronet's peculiar cogniac.

At length, the whole Well was alarmed by the report brought by a smart outrider, that the young Earl of Etherington, supposed to be rising on the horizon of fashion as a star of the first magnitude, intended to pass an hour, or a day, or a week, as it might happen, (for his lordship could not be supposed to know his own mind,) at St Ronan's Well.

This suddenly put all in motion. Almanacks were opened to ascertain his lordship's age, inquiries were made concerning the extent of his fortune, his habits were quoted, his tastes were guessed at; and all that the ingenuity of the Managing Committee could devise was resorted to, in order to recommend their Spa to this favourite of fortune. An express was dispatched to Shaws-Castle with the agreeable intelligence, which fired the train of hope that led to Mowbray's appropriation of his sister's capital. He did not, however, think proper to obey the summons to the Spring; for, not being aware in what light the Earl might regard the worthies there assembled, he did not desire to be found by his lordship in any strict connection with them.

Sir Bingo Binks was in a different situation. The bravery with which he had endured the censure of the place began to give way, when he considered that a person of such distinction as that which public opinion attached to Lord Etherington, should find him bodily indeed at St Ronan's, but, so far as society was concerned, on the road towards the ancient city of Coventry; and his banishment thither, incurred by that most unpardonable offence in modern morality, a solecism in the code of honour. Though sluggish and inert when called to action, the Baronet was by no means an absolute coward; or, if so, he was of that class which fights when reduced to extremity. He manfully sent for Captain MacTurk, who waited upon him with a grave solemnity of aspect, which instantly was exchanged for a radiant joy, when Sir Bingo, in few words, empowered him to carry a message to that damned strolling artist, by whom he had been insulted three days since.

"By Cot," said the Captain, "my exceedingly good and excellent friend, and I am happy to do such a favour for you! And it's well you have

thought of it yourself; because, if it had not been for some of our very goot and excellent friends, that would be putting their spoon into other folks' dish, I should have been asking you a civil question myself, how you came to dine with us, with all that mud and mire which Mr Tyrrel's grasp has left upon the collar of your coat—you understand me.—But it is much better as it is, and I will go to the man with all the speed of light; and though, to be sure, it should have been sooner thought of, yet let me alone to make an excuse for that, just in my own civil way—better late thrive than never do well, you know, Sir Bingo; and if you have made him wait a little while for his morning, you must give him the better measure, my darling."

So saying, he awaited no reply, lest peradventure the commission with which he was so hastily and unexpectedly charged, should have been clogged with some condition of compromise. No such proposal, however, was made on the part of the doughty Sir Bingo, who eyed his friend as he hastily snatched up his rattan to depart, with a dogged look of obstinacy, expressive, to use

his own phrase, of a determined resolution to come up to the scratch; and when he heard the Captain's parting footsteps, and saw the door shut behind him, he valiantly whistled a few bars of Jenny Sutton, in token he cared not a farthing how the matter was to end.

With a swifter pace than his half-pay leisure usually encouraged, or than his habitual dignity permitted, Captain MacTurk cleared the ground betwixt the Spring and its gay vicinity, and the ruins of the Aulton, where reigned our friend Meg Dods, the sole assertor of its ancient dignities. To the door of the Cleikum Inn the Captain addressed himself, as one too much accustomed to war to fear a rough reception; although at the very first aspect of Meg, who presented herself in the gateway, his military experience taught him that his entrance into the place would, in all probability, be disputed.

"Is Master Tyrrel at home?" was the question; and the answer was conveyed, by the counter-interrogation, "Wha may ye be that speers?"

As the most polite reply to this question, and

an indulgence, at the same time, of his own taciturn disposition, the Captain presented to Luckie Dods the fifth part of an ordinary playing card, much grimed with snuff, which bore on its blank side his name and quality. But Luckie Dods rejected the information thus tendered, with contemptuous scorn.

"Nane of your deil's play-books for me," said she; "it's an ill world since sic prick-my-dainty doings came in fashion—It's a poor tongue that canna tell its ain name, and I'll hae nane of your scarts upon pasteboard."

"I am Captain MacTurk, of the —— regiment," said the Captain, disdaining further answer.

"MacTurk?" repeated Meg, with an emphasis, which induced the owner of the name to reply, "Yes, honest woman—MacTurk—Hector MacTurk—Have you any objections to my name, good wife?"

"Nae objections have I," answered Meg; "it's e'en an excellent name for a heathen.—But, Captain MacTurk, since sae it be that ye are a captain, ye may e'en face about and march your

ways hame again, to the tune of Dumbarton drums; for ye are ganging to have nae speech of Maister Tyrrel, or ony lodger of mine."

"And wherefore not?" demanded the veteran; "and is this of your own foolish head, honest woman, or has your lodger left such orders?"

"Maybe he has and maybe no," answered Meg, sturdily; "and I ken nae mair right that ye suld ca' me honest woman, than I have to ca' you honest man, whilk is as far frae my thoughts as it wad be from heaven's truth."

"The woman is delireet!" said Captain MacTurk; "but coom, coom—a gentleman is not to be misused in this way when he comes on a gentleman's business; so make you a bit room on the doorstane, that I may pass by you, or I will make room for myself, by Cot, to your small pleasure."

And so saying, he assumed the air of a man who was about to make good his passage. But Meg, without deigning farther reply, flourished around her head the hearth-broom, which she had been employing to its more legitimate pur-

pose, when disturbed in her housewifery by Captain MacTurk.

"I ken your errand weel eneugh, Captain,—and I ken yersell. Ye are ane of the folk that gang about yonder setting folks by the lugs, as callants set their collies to fight. But ye sall come to nae lodger o' mine, let a be Mr Tirl, with ony such ungodly errand; for I am ane that will keep God's peace and the King's within my dwelling."

So saying, and in explicit token of her peaceable intentions, she again flourished her broom.

The veteran instinctively threw himself under Saint George's guard, and drew two paces back, exclaiming, "That the woman was either mad, or as drunk as whisky could make her;" an alternative which afforded Meg so little satisfaction, that she fairly rushed on her retiring adversary, and began to use her weapon to fell purpose.

"Me drunk, ye scandalous blackguard! (a blow with the broom interposed as parenthesis,) me that am fasting from all but sin and bohea!" (another whack.)

The Captain, swearing, exclaiming, and parrying, caught the blows as they fell, shewing much dexterity in single-stick. The people began to gather; and how long his gallantry might have maintained itself against the spirit of self-defence and revenge, is rather uncertain, when the arrival of Tyrrel, returned from a short walk, put a period to the contest.

Meg, who had a great respect for her guest, began to feel ashamed of her own violence, and slunk into the house; observing, however, that she trowed she had made her hearth-broom and the auld heathen's pow right weel acquainted. The tranquillity which ensued upon her departure, gave Tyrrel an opportunity to ask the Captain, whom he at length recognized, the meaning of this singular affray, and whether the visit was intended for him; to which the veteran replied very discomposedly, that "he should have known that long enough ago, if he had had decent people to open his door, and answer a civil question, instead of a flyting madwoman, who was worse than an eagle," he said, "or a mastiff bitch, or a she-bear, or any other beast in the creation."

Half suspecting his errand, and desirous to avoid unnecessary notoriety, Tyrrel, as he shewed the Captain to the parlour which he called his own, entreated him to excuse the rudeness of his landlady, and to pass from the topic to that which had procured him the honour of this visit.

"And you are right, my good Master Tyrrel," said the Captain, pulling down the sleeves of his coat, adjusting his handkerchief and breast-ruffle, and endeavouring to recover the composure of manner becoming his mission, but still adverting indignantly to the usage he had received—" By ——, if she had but been a man, if it were the King himself—However, Mr Tyrrel, I am come on a civil errand—and very civilly I have been treated—the auld bitch should be set in the stocks, and be tamned.—My friend, Sir Bingo—By ——, I shall never forget that woman's insolence—if there be a constable or a cat-o'-nine-tails within ten miles——"

"I perceive, Captain," said Tyrrel, "that you are too much disturbed at this moment to enter upon the business which has procured me the honour of a visit—if you will step into my

bed-room, and make use of some cold water and a towel, it will give you the time to compose yourself a little."

"I shall do no such thing, Mr Tyrrel," answered the Captain, snappishly; "I do not want to be composed at all, and I do not want to stay in this house a minute longer than to do my errand to you on my friend's behalf—And as for this damned woman Dods——"

"You will in that case forgive my interrupting you, Captain MacTurk, as I presume your errand to me can have no reference to this strange quarrel with my landlady, with which I have nothing to——"

"And if I thought that it had, sir," said the Captain, interrupting Tyrrel in his turn, "you should have given me satisfaction before you was a quarter of an hour older—Oh, I would give five pounds to the pretty fellow that would say, Captain MacTurk, the woman did right!"

"I certainly will not be that person you wish for, Captain," replied Tyrrel, "because I really do not know who was in the right or wrong; but I am certainly sorry that you should have met

with ill usage, when your purpose was to visit me."

"Well, sir, if you are concerned, so am I, and there is an end of it.—And touching my errand to you—you cannot have forgotten that you treated my friend, Sir Bingo Binks, with singular incivility."

"I recollect nothing of the kind, Captain," replied Tyrrel. "I remember that the gentleman, so called, took some uncivil liberties in laying foolish bets concerning me, and that I treated him, in respect to the rest of the company, and the ladies in particular, with a great degree of moderation and forbearance."

"And you must have very fine ideas of forbearance, when you took my good friend by the collar of the coat, and lifted him out of your way as if he had been a puppy dog! My good Mr Tyrrel, I can assure you he does not think that you have forborne him at all, and he has no purpose to forbear you; and I must either carry back a sufficient apology, or you must meet in a quiet way, with a good friend on each side.—And this was the errand I came on, when this

tanned woman, with the hearth-broom, who is an enemy to all quiet and peaceable proceedings——"

"We will forget Mrs Dods for the present, if you please, Captain MacTurk," said Tyrrel—"and to speak to the present subject, you will permit me to say, that I think this summons comes a little of the latest—you know best as a military man, but I have always understood that such differences are usually settled immediately after they occur—not that I intend to baulk Sir Bingo's inclinations upon the score of delay, or any other account."

"I dare say you will not—I dare say you will not, Mr Tyrrel," answered the Captain—"I am free to think that you know better what belongs to a gentleman.—And as to time—look you, my good sir, there are different sorts of people in this world, as there are different sorts of fire-arms. There is your hair-triggered rifles, that go off just at the right moment, and in the twinkling of an eye, and that, Mr Tyrrel, is your true man of honour;—and there is a sort of person that takes a thing up too soon, and sometimes backs

out of it, like your rubbishy Birmingham pieces, that will at one time go off at half-cock, and at another time burn priming without going off at all;—then again there are pieces that hang fire—or I should rather say, that are like the match-locks which the black fellows use in the East Indies—there must be some blowing of the match, and so forth, which occasions delay, but the piece carries true enough after all."

"And your friend Sir Bingo's valour is of this last kind, Captain—I presume, that is the inference. I should have thought it more like a boy's cannon, which is fired by means of a train, and is but a pop-gun after all."

"I cannot allow of such comparisons, sir," said the Captain; "you will understand that I come here as Sir Bingo's friend, and a reflection on him will be an affront to me."

"I disclaim all intended offence to you, Captain—I have no wish to extend the number of my adversaries, or to add to them the name of a gallant officer like yourself," replied Tyrrel.

"You are too obliging, sir," said the Captain, drawing himself up with dignity. "By ——, and

that was said very handsomely!—Well, sir, and shall I not have the pleasure of carrying back any explanation from you to Sir Bingo?—I assure you it would give me pleasure to make this matter handsomely up."

"To Sir Bingo, Captain MacTurk, I have no apology to offer—I think I treated him more gently than his impertinence deserved."

"Och, och!" sighed the Captain, with a strong Highland intonation; "then, there is no more to be said, but just to settle time and place; for pistols, I suppose, must be the weapons."

"All these matters are quite the same to me," said Tyrrel, "only in respect of time, I should wish it to be as speedy as possible—What say you to one afternoon this very day?—You may name the place."

"At one afternoon," replied the Captain deliberately, "Sir Bingo will attend you—the place may be the Buckstane; for as the whole company go to the water-side to-day to eat a kettle of fish, there will be no risk of interruption.—And who shall I speak to, my good friend, on your side of the quarrel?"

"Really, Captain," replied Tyrrel, "that is a puzzling question—I have no friend here—I suppose you could hardly act for both?"

"It would be totally, absolutely, and altogether out of the question, my good friend," replied MacTurk. "But if you will trust to me, I will bring up a friend on your part from the Well, who, though you never saw him before, will settle matters for you as well as if you had been intimate for twenty years—and I will bring up the ould Doctor, if I can get him unloosed from the petticoat of that fat widow Blower, that he has strung himself upon."

"I have no doubt you will do everything with perfect accuracy, Captain. At one o'clock, then, we meet at the Buckstane—Stay, permit me to see you to the door."

"By ——, and it is not altogether so unnecessary," said the Captain; "for the tamned woman with the besom might have some advantage in that long dark passage, knowing the ground better than I do—tamn her, I will have amends on her, if there be whipping-post, or ducking-stool, or a pair of stocks in the parish!" And so

saying, the Captain trudged off, his spirits ever and anon agitated by recollection of the causeless aggression of Meg Dods, and again composed to a state of happy serenity by the recollection of the agreeable arrangement which he had made between Mr Tyrrel, and his friend Sir Bingo Binks.

We have heard of men of undoubted benevolence of character and disposition, whose principal delight was to see a miserable criminal, degraded alike by his previous crimes, and the sentence which he had incurred, conclude a vicious and wretched life, by an ignominious and painful death. It was some such inconsistency of character which induced honest Captain MacTurk, who had really been a meritorious officer, and was an honourable and well-intentioned man, to place his chief delight in setting his friends by the ears, and then acting as umpire in the dangerous rencontres, which, according to his code of honour, were absolutely necessary to restore peace and cordiality. We leave the explanation of such anomalies to the labours of craniologists, for they seem to defy all the researches of the Ethic philosopher.

CHAPTER XIII.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

Evans. I pray you now, good Master Slender's serving man, and friend Simple, by your name, which way have you looked for Master Caius?

Slender. Marry, sir, the City-ward, the Park-ward, every way; Old Windsor way, and every way.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

Sir Bingo Binks received the Captain's communication with the same dogged sullenness he had displayed at sending the challenge; a most ungracious *humph*, ascending, as it were, from the very bottom of his stomach, through the folds of a Belcher handkerchief, intimating his acquiescence in a tone nearly as gracious as that with which the drowsy traveller acknowledges the intimation of the slip-shod ostler, that it is on the stroke of five, and the horn will sound in a minute. Captain MacTurk by no means considered this ejaculation as expressing a proper estimate

of his own trouble and services. "Humph," he replied, "and what does that mean, Sir Bingo? Have not I here had the trouble to put you just into the neat road; and would you have been able to make a handsome affair out of it at all, after you had let it hang so long in the wind, if I had not taken on myself to make it agreeable to the gentleman, and cooked as neat a mess out of it as I have seen a Frenchman do out of a stale sprat?"

Sir Bingo saw it was necessary to mutter some intimation of acquiescence and acknowledgment, which, however inarticulate, was sufficient to satisfy the veteran, to whom the adjustment of a personal affair of this kind was a labour of love, and who now, kindly mindful of his promise to Tyrrel, hurried away as if he had been about the most charitable action upon earth, to secure the attendance of some one as a witness on the stranger's part.

Mr Winterblossom was the person whom Mac-Turk had in his own mind pitched upon as the fittest person to perform this act of benevolence; and he lost no time in communicating his wish to that worthy gentleman. But Mr Winterblossom,

though a man of the world, and well enough acquainted with such matters, was by no means so passionately addicted to them as was the man of peace, Captain Hector MacTurk. As a *bon vivant*, he hated trouble of any kind, and the shrewd selfishness of his disposition enabled him to foresee that a good deal might accrue to all concerned in the course of this business. He, therefore, coolly replied, that he knew nothing of Mr Tyrrel—not even whether he was a gentleman or not; and besides, he had received no regular application in his behalf—he did not, therefore, feel himself at all inclined to go to the field as his second. This refusal drove the poor Captain to despair. He conjured his friend to be more public-spirited, and entreated him to consider the reputation of the Well, which was to them as a common country, and the honour of the company to which they both belonged, and of which Mr Winterblossom was in a manner the proper representative, as being, with consent of all, the perpetual president. He reminded him how many quarrels had been nightly undertaken and departed from on the ensuing morning, without any suitable

consequences—said, "that people began to talk of the place oddly; and that, for his own part, he found his honour so nearly touched, that he had begun to think he himself would be obliged to bring somebody or other to account for the general credit of the Well; and now, just when the most beautiful occasion had arisen to put everything on a handsome footing, it was hard —it was cruel—it was most unjustifiable—in Mr Winterblossom to decline so simple a matter as was requested of him."

Dry and taciturn as the Captain was on all ordinary occasions, he proved on the present eloquent and almost pathetic; for the tears came into his eyes when he recounted the various quarrels which had become addled, notwithstanding his best endeavours to hatch them into an honourable meeting; and here was one at length just chipping the shell like to be smothered for want of the most ordinary concession on the part of Winterblossom. In short, that gentleman could not hold out any longer. "It was," he said, "a very foolish business, he thought; but to oblige Sir Bingo and Captain MacTurk, he had no objection to

walk with them about noon as far as the Buck-stane, although he must observe the day was hazy, and he had felt a prophetic twinge or two, which looked like a visit of his old acquaintance podagra."

"Never mind that, my excellent friend," said the Captain, "a sup out of Sir Bingo's flask is like enough to put that to rights; and by my soul it is not the thing he is like to leave behind him on this sort of occasion, unless I be far mistaken in my man."

"But," said Winterblossom, "although I comply with your wishes thus far, Captain MacTurk, I by no means undertake for certain to back this same Master Tyrrel, of whom I know nothing at all, but only agree to go to the place in hopes of preventing mischief."

"Never fash your beard about that, Mr Winterblossom," replied the Captain; "for a little mischief, as you call it, is become a thing absolutely necessary to the credit of the place; and I am sure, whatsoever be the consequences, they cannot in the present instance be very fatal to anybody; for here is a young fellow that, if he

should have a misfortune, nobody will miss, for nobody knows him ; and then here is Sir Bingo, whom everybody knows so well, that they will miss him all the less."

" And there will be Lady Bingo, a wealthy widow," said Winterblossom, throwing his hat upon his head with the grace of former days, and sighing to see, as he looked in the mirror, how much time, that had whitened his hair, rounded his stomach, wrinkled his brow, and bent down his shoulders, had disqualified him, as he expressed it, " for entering for such a plate."

Secure of Winterblossom, the Captain's next anxiety was to obtain the presence of Dr Quackleben, who, although he wrote himself M.D., did not by any means decline practice as a surgeon when any job offered for which he was likely to be well paid, as was warranted in the present instance, the wealthy Baronet being a party principally concerned. The Doctor, therefore, like the eagle scenting the carnage, seized at the first word with alacrity the huge volume of morocco leather which formed his case of portable instruments, and uncoiled before the Captain with ostentatious

display, its formidable and glittering contents, upon which he began to lecture as upon a copious and interesting text, until the man of war thought it necessary to give him a word of caution.

"Och," says he, "I do pray you, Doctor, to carry that packet of yours under the breast of your coat, or in your pocket, or somewhere out of sight, and by no means to produce or open it before the parties. For although scalpels, and tourniquets, and pincers, and the like, are very ingenious implements, and pretty to behold, and are also useful when time and occasion call for them, yet I have known the sight of them take away a man's fighting stomach, and so lose their owner a job, Dr Quackleben."

"By my faith, Captain MacTurk," said the Doctor, "you speak as if you were graduated!— I have known these treacherous articles play their master many a cursed trick. The very sight of my forceps, without the least effort on my part, once cured an inveterate tooth-ach of three days' duration, prevented the extraction of a carious molindinar, which it was the very end of their formation to achieve, and sent me home minus a

guinea.—But hand me that great-coat, Captain, and we will place the instruments in ambuscade, until they are called into action in due time. I should think something will happen—Sir Bingo is a sure shot at a moor-cock."

"Cannot say," replied MacTurk; "I have known the pistol shake many a hand that held the fowling-piece fast enough. Yonder Tyrrel looks like a tevilish cool customer—I watched him the whole time I was delivering my errand, and I can promise you he is mettle to the back bone."

"Well—I will have my bandages ready *secundum artem*," replied the man of medicine. "We must guard against hæmorrhage—Sir Bingo is a plethoric subject.—One o'clock, you say—at the Buckstane—I will be punctual."

"Will you not walk with us?" said Captain MacTurk, who seemed willing to keep his whole convoy together on this occasion, lest, peradventure, any of them had fled from under his patronage.

"No," replied the Doctor, "I must first make an apology to worthy Mrs Blower, for I had pro-

mised her my arm down to the river-side, where they are all to eat a kettle of fish."

"By Cot, and I hope we shall make them a prettier kettle of fish than was ever seen at St Ronan's," said the Captain, rubbing his hands.

"Don't say *we*, Captain," replied the cautious Doctor; "I for one have nothing to do with the meeting—wash my hands of it. No, no, I cannot afford to be clapt up as accessory.—You ask me to meet you at the Buckstane—no purpose assigned—I am willing to oblige my worthy friend, Captain MacTurk—walk that way, thinking of nothing particular—hear the report of pistols—hasten to the spot—fortunately just in time to prevent the most fatal consequences—chance most opportunely to have my case of instruments with me—indeed, generally walk with them about me—*nunquam non paratus*—then give my professional definition of the wound and state of the patient. That is the way to give evidence, Captain, before sheriffs, coroners, and such sort of folks—never commit oneself—it is a rule of our profession."

"Well, well, Doctor," answered the Captain, "you know your own ways best; and so you are but there to give a chance of help in case of accident, all the laws of honour will be fully complied with. But it would be a foul reflection upon me, as a man of honour, if I did not take care that there should be somebody to come in thirdsman between Death and my principal."

At the *awful hour of one afternoon*, there arrived upon the appointed spot Captain MacTurk, leading to the field the valorous Sir Bingo, not exactly straining like a greyhound in the slips, but rather looking moody like a butcher's bull-dog, which knows he must fight since his master bids him. Yet the Baronet shewed no outward flinching or abatement of courage, excepting, that the tune of Jenny Sutton, which he had whistled without intermission since he left the Hotel, had, during the last half mile of their walk, sunk into silence; although, to look at the muscles of the mouth, projection of the lip, and vacancy of the eye, it seemed as if the notes were still passing through his mind, and that he whistled Jenny Sutton in his imagi-

nation. Mr Winterblossom came two minutes after this happy pair, and the Doctor was equally punctual.

"Upon my soul," said the former, "this is a mighty silly affair, Sir Bingo, and might, I think, be easily taken up at less risk to all parties, than a meeting of this kind. You should recollect, Sir Bingo, that you have much depending upon your life—you are a married man, Sir Bingo."

Sir Bingo turned the quid in his mouth, and squirted out the juice in a most coachman-like manner.

"Mr Winterblossom," said the Captain, "Sir Bingo has in this matter put himself in my hands, and unless you think yourself more able to direct his course than I am, I must frankly tell you, that I will be disobliged by your interference. You may speak to your own friend as much as you please; and if you find yourself authorized to make any proposal, I will be desirous to lend an ear to it on the part of my worthy principal, Sir Bingo. But I will be plain with you, that I do not greatly approve of settlements upon the field, though I hope I am a

quiet and peaceable man; yet here is our honour to be looked after in the first place; and moreover, I must insist that every proposal for accommodation shall originate with your party or yourself."

"*My* party?" answered Winterblossom; "why really, though I came hither at your request, Captain MacTurk, yet I must see more of the matter, ere I can fairly pronounce myself second to a man I never saw but once."

"And, perhaps, may never see again," said the Doctor, looking his watch; "for it is ten minutes past the hour, and here is no Mr Tyrrel."

"Hey! what's that you say, Doctor?" said the Baronet, awakened from his apathy.

"He speaks tamned nonsense," said the Captain, looking at a huge, old-fashioned, turnip-shaped watch, with a blackened silver dial-plate. "It is not above three minutes after one by the true time, and I will uphold Mr Tyrrel to be a man of his word—never saw a man take a thing more coolly."

"Not more coolly than he takes his walk this way," said the Doctor; "for the hour is as I tell you—remember, I am professional—have pulses to count by the second and half-second—my time-piece must go as true as the sun."

"And I have mounted guard a thousand times by my watch," said the Captain; "and I defy the devil to say that Hector MacTurk did not always discharge his duty to the twentieth part of the fraction of a second—it was my great grandmother Lady Killbracklin's, and I will maintain its reputation against any time-piece that ever went upon wheels."

"Well, then, look at your own watch, Captain," said Winterblossom, "for time stands still with no man, and while we speak the hour advances. On my word, I think this Mr Tyrrel intends to humbug us."

"Hey! what's that you say?" said Sir Bingo, once more starting from his sullen reverie.

"I shall not look at my watch upon no such matter," said the Captain; "nor will I any way be disposed to doubt your friend's honour, Mr Winterblossom."

"*My* friend?" said Mr Winterblossom; "I must tell you once more, Captain, that this Mr Tyrrel is no friend of mine—none in the world. He is your friend, Captain MacTurk; and I own, if he keeps us waiting much longer on this occasion, I will be apt to consider his friendship as of very little value."

"And how dare you then say that the man is my friend?" said the Captain, knitting his brows in a most formidable manner.

"Pooh! pooh! Captain," answered Winterblossom, coolly, if not contemptuously—"keep all that for silly boys; I have lived in the world too long either to provoke quarrels, or to care about them. So reserve your fire; it is all thrown away on such an old cock as I am. But I really wish we knew whether this fellow means to come —twenty minutes past the hour—I think it is odds that you are bilked, Sir Bingo?"

"Bilked! hey!" cried Sir Bingo; "by Gad, I always thought so—I wagered with Mowbray he was a raff—I am had, by Gad. I'll wait no longer than the half hour, by Gad, were he a field-marshal."

"You will be directed in that matter by your friend, if you please, Sir Bingo," said the Captain.

"D—n me if I will," returned the Baronet—"Friend? a pretty friend, to bring me out here on such a fool's errand! I knew the fellow was a raff—but I never thought you, with all your chaff about honour, such a d—d spoon as to bring a message from a fellow who has fled the pit!"

"If you regret so much having come here to no purpose," said the Captain, in a very lofty tone, "and if you think I have used you like a spoon, as you say, I will have no objection in life to take Mr Tyrrel's place, and serve your occasion, my boy!"

"By ——! and if you like it, you may fire away, and welcome," said Sir Bingo; "and I'll spin a crown for first shot, for I do not understand being brought here for nothing, d—n me!"

"And there was never man alive so ready as I am to give you something to stay your stomach," said the irritable Highlander.

"Oh fie, gentlemen! fie, fie, fie!" exclaimed the pacific Mr Winterblossom; "For shame, Captain—Out upon you, Sir Bingo, are you mad?—what, principal and second!—the like was never heard of."

The parties were in some degree recalled to their more cool recollections by this expostulation, yet continued a short quarter-deck walk to and fro, upon parallel lines, looking at each other sullenly as they passed, and bristling like two dogs who have a mind to quarrel, yet hesitate to commence hostilities. During this promenade, also, the perpendicular and erect carriage of the veteran, rising on his toes at every step, formed a whimsical contrast with the heavy loutish shuffle of the bulky Baronet, who had, by dint of practice, very nearly attained that most enviable of all carriages, the gait of a shambling Yorkshire ostler. His coarse spirit was now thoroughly kindled, and like iron, or any other baser metal, which is slow in receiving heat, it retained long the smouldering and angry spirit of resentment which had originally brought him

to the place, and now rendered him willing to wreak his uncomfortable feelings upon the nearest object which occurred, since the first purpose of his coming thither was frustrated. In his own phrase, his pluck was up, and feeling himself in a fighting humour, he thought it a pity, like Bob Acres, that so much good courage should be thrown away. As, however, that courage after all consisted chiefly in ill humour; and as in the demeanour of the Captain, he read nothing deferential or deprecatory of his wrath, he began to listen with more attention to the arguments of Mr Winterblossom, who entreated them not to sully, by private quarrel, the honour they had that day so happily acquired without either blood or risk.

"It was now," he said, "three quarters of an hour past the time appointed for this person, who calls himself Tyrrel, to meet Sir Bingo Binks. Now, instead of standing squabbling here, which serves no purpose, I propose we should reduce to writing the circumstances which attend this affair, for the satisfaction of the com-

pany at the Well, and that the memorandum shall be regularly attested by our subscriptions; after which, I shall farther humbly propose that it be subjected to the revision of the Committee of Management."

"I object to any revision of a statement to which my name shall be appended," said the Captain.

"Right—very true, Captain," said the complaisant Mr Winterblossom; "undoubtedly you know best, and your signature is completely sufficient to authenticate this transaction—however, as it is the most important which has occurred since the Spring was established, I propose we shall all sign the *proces verbal*, as I may term it."

"Leave me out, if you please," said the Doctor, not much satisfied that both the original quarrel and the bye-battle had passed over without any occasion for the offices of a Machaon; "leave me out, if you please; for it does not become me to be ostensibly concerned in any proceedings, which have had for their object a breach of the peace. And for the importance of waiting

here for an hour, in a fine afternoon, it is my opinion there was a more important service done to the Well of Saint Ronan's, when I, Quentin Quackleben, M.D. cured Lady Penelope Penfeather of her seventh attack upon the nerves, attended with febrile symptoms."

"No disparagement to your skill at all, Doctor," said Mr Winterblossom; "but I conceive the lesson which this fellow has received will be a great means to prevent improper persons from appearing at the Spring hereafter; and, for my part, I shall move that no one be invited to dine at the table in future, till his name is regularly entered as a member of the company, in the lists at the public room. And I hope both Sir Bingo and the Captain will receive the thanks of the company, for their spirited conduct in expelling the intruder.—Sir Bingo, will you allow me to apply to your flask—a little twinge I feel, owing to the dampness of the grass."

Sir Bingo, soothed by the consequence he had acquired, readily imparted to the invalid a thimbleful of his cordial, which, we believe, had been

prepared by some cunning chemist in the wilds of Glenlivat. He then filled a bumper, and extended it towards the veteran, as an unequivocal symptom of reconciliation. The real turbinacious flavour no sooner reached the nose of the Captain, than the beverage was turned down his throat with symptoms of most unequivocal applause.

"I shall have some hope of the young fellows of this day," he said, "now that they begin to give up their Dutch and French distilled waters, and stick to genuine Highland ware. By ——, it is the only liquor fit for a gentleman to drink in a morning, if he can have the good fortune to come by it."

"Or after dinner either, Captain," said the Doctor, to whom the glass had passed in rotation; "it is worth all the wines in France for flavour, and more cordial to the system besides."

"And now," said the Captain, "that we may not go off the ground with anything on our stomachs worse than the whisky, I can afford to say (as Captain Hector MacTurk's character is to-

lerably well established,) that I am sorry for the little difference that has occurred betwixt me and my worthy friend, Sir Bingo."

"And since you are so civil, Captain," said Sir Bingo; "why, I am sorry too—only it would put the devil out of temper to lose so fine a fishing day—wind south—fine air on the pool—water settled from the flood—just in trim—and I dare say three pairs of hooks have passed over my cast before this time."

He closed this elaborate lamentation with a libation of the same cordial which he had imparted to his companions; and they returned in a body to the Hotel, where the transactions of the morning were soon afterwards announced to the company, by the following program :—

STATEMENT.

"Sir Bingo Binks, baronet, having found himself aggrieved by the uncivil behaviour of an individual calling himself Francis Tyrrel, now or lately a resident at the Cleikum Inn, Aulton of St Ronan's; and having empowered Captain Hector MacTurk to wait upon the said Mr

Tyrrel to demand an apology, under the alternative of personal satisfaction, according to the laws of honour and the practice of gentlemen, the said Tyrrel voluntarily engaged to meet the said Sir Bingo Binks, baronet, at the Buckstane, near St Ronan's Burn, upon this present day, being Wednesday —— August. In consequence of which appointment, we, the undersigned, did attend at the place named, from one o'clock till two, without seeing or hearing anything whatsoever of the said Francis Tyrrel, or any one in his behalf—which fact we make thus publicly known, that all men, and particularly the distinguished company assembled at the Fox Hotel, may be duly apprized of the behaviour of the said Francis Tyrrel, in case of his again presuming to intrude himself into the society of persons of honour.

"The Fox Inn and Hotel, St Ronan's Well—August, 18—.

(Signed) "BINGO BINKS.

"HECTOR MACTURK.

"PHILIP WINTERBLOSSOM."

A little lower followed this separate attestation;—

"I, Quentin Quackleben, M.D., F.R.S., D.E., B.L., X.Z., &c. &c., being called upon to attest what I know in the said matter, do hereby verify, that, being by accident at the Buckstane, near St Ronan's Burn, on this present day, at the hour of one afternoon, and chancing to remain there for the space of nearly an hour, conversing with Sir Bingo Binks, Captain MacTurk, and Mr Winterblossom, we did not, during that time, see or hear anything of or from the person calling himself Francis Tyrrel, whose presence at that place seemed to be expected by the gentlemen I have just named." This affiché was dated like the former, and certified under the august hand of Quentin Quackleben, M.D., &c. &c. &c.

Again, and prefaced by the averment that an improper person had been lately introduced into the company at St Ronan's Well, there came forth a legislative enactment, on the part of the Committee, declaring "that no one shall in future be invited to the dinners, or balls, or other enter-

tainments of the Well, until their names shall be regularly entered in the books kept for the purpose at the rooms." Lastly, there was a vote of thanks to Sir Bingo Binks and Captain MacTurk for their spirited conduct, and the pains which they had taken to exclude an improper person from the company at St Ronan's Well.

These annunciations speedily became the magnet of the day. All idlers crowded to peruse them; and it would be endless to notice the "God bless me's"—the "Lord have a care of us"—the "Saw you ever the like's" of gossips, any more than the "Dear me's" and "Oh, laa's" of the titupping misses, and the oaths of the pantalooned or buckskin'd beaux. The character of Sir Bingo rose like the stocks at the news of a dispatch from the Duke of Wellington, and, what was extraordinary, attained some consequence even in the estimation of his lady. All shook their heads at the recollection of the unlucky Tyrrel, and found out much in his manner and address which convinced them that he was but an adventurer and swindler. A few, however, less partial to the Committee of Management, (for whenever there is

an administration, there will soon arise an opposition,) whispered among themselves, that, to give the fellow his due, the man, be he what he would, had only come among them, like the devil, when he was called for—And honest Dame Blower blessed herself when she heard of such bloodthirsty doings as had been intended, and "thanked God that honest Doctor Kickherben had come to nae harm amang a' their nonsense."

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

EDINBURGH.
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